

George R. Ariyoshi
An Oral History of the First
Asian American Governor

Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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Okage sama de, with obligation to all.

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INTRODUCTION

The Center for Oral History (COH), a unit of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, was established in 1976. COH seeks to provide present and future researchers with first-person, primary source documents with which to write history from a diversity of perspectives. The only state-supported center of its kind in the islands, COH’s major function is to research, conduct, transcribe, edit, and disseminate oral history interviews with persons possessing knowledge about Hawai‘i’s past.

Since its inception, COH has disseminated to repositories, oral history interviews with more than 800 individuals and deposited in archives, a collection of more than 36,000 transcript pages.

COH also produces educational materials based on the interviews, conducts classes and workshops on oral history methodology, and serves as a clearinghouse for oral history research relating to Hawai‘i.

Project Background and Methodology

This volume, *George R. Ariyoshi: An Oral History of the First Asian American Governor*, features extensive interviews with former governor of Hawai‘i, George R. Ariyoshi. Included also are interviews with former first lady, Jean Ariyoshi, and his sister, Betty Nojima, both of whom possess unique vantage points from which to comment upon and share knowledge about the governor.

It is a project developed in collaboration with Tom Coffman, a longtime journalist, historian, and documentary maker, who has studied and written extensively about Hawai‘i’s modern history. As a reporter, he first met Ariyoshi during the 1968 legislative session. In the 1990s, he edited Governor Ariyoshi’s autobiography, *With Obligation to All*.

In 2012, Coffman, familiar with the Center’s open-ended, whole life interview format, met with COH Director Warren Nishimoto who agreed to the collaborative venture, building on Coffman’s knowledge of the islands’ political history and his past work with the Governor.

A chronological life-history approach was used not only to explore and contextualize the Ariyoshis’ years in politics and public service but to discover the formative and transformative challenges and experiences encountered by themselves and 20th century Hawai‘i.

Unrecorded preliminary interviews were conducted with the Governor, Jean Ariyoshi, and Betty Nojima to establish rapport and obtain biographical information.

No set questionnaire was used in the recorded sessions; the interviewers followed an outline of topics designed specifically for each interviewee. Each topic outline was constructed using biographical information from the preliminary interview and various written sources.

The recorded interviews were conducted by Nishimoto, COH Research Associate Michi Kodama-Nishimoto, and Coffman. Fifteen sessions were conducted in Honolulu with Governor Ariyoshi, three with Jean Ariyoshi, and one with Betty Nojima. Sessions were dispersed over a ten-month period, between May 2012 and March 2013; most sessions were about 90–120 minutes in length.

The interviews were transcribed almost verbatim by COH staff. The transcripts were audio-

reviewed against the original recordings, then edited slightly for clarity and historical accuracy.

Each interviewee reviewed his/her own transcripts. Each was asked to verify names and dates and clarify statements where necessary. COH then incorporated the changes.

Prior to releasing their transcripts for publication, the interviewees read and signed a legal document releasing all rights, title, and interest to the edited transcripts to the Center for Oral History for scholarly and educational use.

George R. Ariyoshi

George R. Ariyoshi was the third elected governor of the State of Hawai‘i (1973–1986), the first elected non-white governor of the State of Hawai‘i, and also the first Asian American governor of any state. In 1954, at age twenty-eight, he became the youngest of the upstart Democrats who took over the legislature, in what was to become known as “the democratic revolution,” that broke the hold of the Republican Party in the U.S. Territory of Hawai‘i. As lieutenant governor and then acting governor, he served out the last year of his mentor John A. Burns’ last term (1973). Thereafter he was elected in his own right to the first of three four-year terms. Because of a subsequent constitutional term limit, his record of thirteen years in high office is likely never to be duplicated.

In all, he won twenty-five campaigns for office, losing none, but paradoxically approached politics with a willingness to lose on principle and return to the practice of law, which he dearly valued. When challenged for re-election in 1978, his campaign coined a slogan that stuck, “Quiet but Effective.” In Japanese, he taught Hawai‘i the words, “*Okage sama de*,” meaning “I am what I am because of you.” He eschewed theatrics, simple solutions, and attacks on his opponents. He practiced civility and calm. He was reflective, thoughtful, and complicated. He thought in terms of generations.

If his political philosophy was reduced to a few words, it might be said that he tended to be socially progressive and fiscally conservative. He promoted long-term planning aimed at the stewardship of Hawai‘i’s agricultural, scenic and cultural lands, as well as the careful management of fresh water and ocean resources. He began his term of office with a sizeable cash deficit and left office with a sizeable cash surplus.

When interviewed in the fifteen extensive sessions of this oral history, he grappled with each and every question on its merits.

Jean Ariyoshi

Jean Miye Ariyoshi served twelve years (1974–1986) as the First Lady of the State of Hawai‘i. In that role, she restored Washington Place, the official gubernatorial residence, to what it had once been as the home of Queen Lili‘uokalani. She celebrated it as a people’s place, welcoming local residents for tours and special events. At Washington Place, she hosted an array of distinguished dignitaries crossing the Pacific Ocean.

As First Lady, she initiated community service programs, promoted volunteerism, and supported the work of various non-profit organizations. Her “Million Trees of Aloha” program, greening much of the islands’ well-travelled areas, is a visible reminder of her efforts.

Throughout her husband’s political career, Jean Ariyoshi was an integral part of his success. Putting people at ease, talking with people, were strengths that she brought to campaigns and to the many official functions she attended or organized.

As wife of the eldest son, mother, and daughter-in-law in a multi-generational household, she embraced change but was respectful of tradition.

Her interview is filled with thoughtful answers, candor, and an appreciation for her life experiences from small-town girl to Hawai‘i’s First Lady.

Betty Nojima

Betty Nojima, just two years younger than the Governor, grew up in Pālama, Chinatown Honolulu, Mānoa, and Kalihi, in the tight-knit family household of Ryoza and Mitsue Ariyoshi, who passed on traditional Japanese values and practices to their children.

She attended public schools and graduated from McKinley High School as did her brother. A graduate of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, she was a social worker on the island of O‘ahu.

She, like other family members, was very active in the Governor’s campaigns for elected office.

Her observations about her brother reflect their closeness, respect for each other, and their sense of humor.

Transcript Usage and Availability

This volume of transcripts includes: a glossary of all non-English and Hawai‘i Creole English (HCE) words italicized in the transcripts and a detailed subject/name index.

A biographical summary precedes each interview.

There is a series of numbers at the beginning of each transcript. The series includes, in order, a project number, cassette number, session number, and year the interview was conducted. For example, 59-1-1-12 identifies COH project number 59, cassette number 1, recorded interview session 1, and the year 2012.

Brackets [] in the transcripts indicate additions/changes made by COH staff. Parentheses () in the transcripts indicate additions/changes made by the interviewee. A three-dot ellipsis indicates an interruption; a four-dot ellipsis indicates a trail-off by a speaker. Three dashes indicate a false start.

The transcripts are the primary documents presently available for research purposes.

Michi Kodama-Nishimoto

Warren Nishimoto

Tom Coffman

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: GEORGE R. ARIYOSHI

His parents, Ryoza and Mitsue, were immigrants from Japan. His father had a variety of jobs, including being a crewman on a ship, working at a rock quarry, and stevedoring on docks in Honolulu. The couple operated a succession of businesses: a tofu shop, two separate eateries (one in Pālama, another in Chinatown Honolulu), and eventually a dry-cleaning shop.

The family lived in various areas of Oahu: Wai‘ālae, Lā‘ie, Pālama, Chinatown, Mānoa, and Kalihi.

George Ariyoshi attended Central Intermediate School where a teacher encouraged his interest in the legal profession. He graduated from McKinley High School in 1944. Drafted during World War II, he served with the Military Intelligence Service in Occupied Japan. With the help of the GI Bill, he continued his education at the University of Hawai‘i, Michigan State University, and the University of Michigan where he received his law degree in 1952.

After passing the bar in Hawai‘i, he practiced law in Honolulu.

In 1954, he was among the Democrats who broke the Republican hold on the territorial legislature. He served in the House of Representatives until 1958; he served in the Senate until 1970.

He was lieutenant governor with Governor John A. Burns from 1970 until 1973, serving as acting governor when Burns fell ill. Officially elected in 1974, Ariyoshi served three full terms as governor of the state of Hawai‘i.

He guided the state through difficult economic times and promoted long-term planning to best utilize and protect island resources. He engaged the state and the nation in the building of relationships with governments of Asia and the Pacific.

After leaving office, he has held several corporate and non-profit positions.

He continues to share his knowledge and concerns about Hawai‘i—past, present, and future.

He resides in Honolulu with wife Jean and family.

Tape No. 59-1-1-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

May 7, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN) and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

WN: Okay, testing one, two, three, testing, one, two, three. Okay, this is an interview with Governor George R. Ariyoshi on May 7, 2012. The interviewers Warren Nishimoto and Michi Kodama-Nishimoto. And we’re in his office in Honolulu, O‘ahu. So Governor Ariyoshi, good morning.

GA: Hi, good morning.

WN: First question—difficult one—is when and where were you born?

GA: I was born on the corner of Smith and Pauahi Street, 1926 [in Honolulu, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i].

WN: Mm-hmm [yes]. Can you tell us what your father [Ryozo Ariyoshi] was doing, living on Smith and Pauahi Street?

GA: Yeah. My father had a tofu shop [at 43 North Pauahi Street] at that particular time. But my father also worked on and off as a stevedore. Between my mother [Mitsue Ariyoshi] and my father, they made tofu downstairs, and we lived upstairs.

WN: Okay, before we get to the tofu shop, I wanted to ask you, can you give us some background on your father? How and why he came to Hawai‘i.

GA: Uh-huh [yes]. My father was working on a Japanese steamship, and the ship happened to stop in Hawai‘i [in 1919] for provisions—water and whatever else that they needed. All the crew members got off, and they toured Hawai‘i and O‘ahu that time and looked around. My father and about five [including cousins, Chozo and Ginzo Matsukawa]—maybe about a dozen of his friends—looked around and said, “Oh, Hawai‘i is really a nice place.” They never went back on the boat. That meant that they made an illegal entry into the United States.

That’s something that I did not know about until 1951. I graduated from Michigan Law School in ’52. I was home in Hawai‘i during my last summer break. And my father told me this for the first time, and I was flabbergasted. I said, “Papa, weren’t you concerned during the war years that they were going to come and pick you up?”

He told me, oh, he understood that was going to happen, and he had made up his mind that he was going to be picked up. But for whatever reasons, he was spared. He was contented to live together throughout the war years.

WN: Can you give us a little bit of background on him?

GA: My father was a very strong—physically, very strong person. And he participated in amateur sumo . . .

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, continuing here, we're talking about your father, Ryozo Ariyoshi, and what his background is.

GA: My father was a physically very strong person. As a result, he took part in amateur sumo wrestling here in Hawai'i. He had a sumo name, which was Yahatayama, which comes from his own local prefecture. People never knew him as Ariyoshi. They always knew him as Yahatayama. He was also stevedore, and during those days of stevedoring at waterfront, it was pretty rough. There were people who were bullies who tried to get things—extract monies and things from others—but my father never had the problem because they felt that he was strong and did not want to do anything to take anything away from him. He worked as a stevedore ever since I can remember, until the start of the war, and at which time, aliens—Japanese aliens—could not work on the waterfront, Downtown waterfront area. My father was strong, physically, but he also had very strong feelings about things and people.

I had the benefit of his advice on many, many things that had happened to me. My father always felt that values are very important. He always used to tell me, "Oh, no matter how good a person is, no one can really achieve anything by himself or herself. He needs a lot of help from other people. So whenever you do anything, never brag about or boast about you did things and what you had accomplished. Always acknowledge that there were so many other people who participated in what you were able to achieve. Even in terms of who you are or what you have become, your teachers, for example, have helped you greatly, and I have gotten a lot of help from teachers. Therefore, you should always acknowledge that many other people made it possible for you to do what you want to do." He used the Japanese phrase that I remember so well. He always talked about acknowledged help of other people. Say that they gave you help and use the word, "*Okage sama de.*" Because of other people's help, that you were able to achieve what you achieved.

And so, some of these values that my father fed out to me—he used to tell me, "*Haji*," another Japanese word, shame. Don't bring shame on yourself, your family. Do what is honorable. He talked about the need for mutuality, *otagai*, that things happen because people mutually work together, benefit. Something that happened to you could've happened to somebody else. Or something that happened to somebody else could have happened to you, so always acknowledge mutual obligations and feelings with everybody else around you.

- WN: Now all of these values that he imparted on you, has he ever talked about his parents and how he grew up? What kinds of values that he grew up with in Japan?
- GA: Not directly in that way, but he told me—the things that I remember—my grandpa and grandparents, [Heitaro and Maki Ariyoshi] they were both very strong also. My grandpa [Heitaro Ariyoshi] was a giant in the community. Over six feet in Japan, and during that generation, that's a huge, huge thing. Very strong and how whenever something had to be done in the *machi* [Hirotsu, Fukuoka, Japan], in the village, they always called on him to come in and help to do things.
- WN: He was physically strong like your father. Was there a tradition of sumo in the family? I mean, did your grandfather practice sumo as well?
- GA: I don't know that. But I know that my uncles were very strong and big. The one uncle that I met after the war—I was so surprised that he was taller than I was.
- WN: I was wondering, you know, your father—you said your father, in essence, jumped ship. Was there anything in his character that would cause you to say, "Oh yeah, you know, that's typical of him," or something like that?
- GA: I think he wanted to enjoy life. He wanted to look at what would be good for himself and the family. I think that's what he always tried to do. I mentioned that his strength—his strong mind. During the war years, we had blackouts and curfew. The war started when I was a sophomore in high school. We had curfew, and as a result, we had to be off the streets and at home together. So I never went out during my high school years. It was all spent together with our family. We had lots of conversation between our parents—my mother and my father and my brother and my sisters—living together under those conditions.

When I ran for office in 1954, I had very little time to prepare for that campaign because I made the decision to run only three days—the day before the filing deadline, which was only thirty days to the primary. At that district that I ran in, at that time, O'ahu was divided into two representative districts. Today, it's divided into about thirty-five, thirty-six districts. So we had a large group.

I campaigned hard. I was very fortunate in getting the kind of support that I did from my classmates. My campaign manager, Tom Ebesu, classmate from Farrington High School. So we had Farrington and McKinley classmates of 1944, coming together and working the campaign. We covered, from Downtown Honolulu, all the way around the island—Waipahu, Wai'anae, back to Kahuku, Kāne'ohe—that large district. We had many people who campaigned for us, and we didn't have a chance to ask other people for help. We put that organization together to go out and help. I remember that the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] was very concerned that my—without my asking them for help and without their participation—that I did so well in the primary. They indicated to me that they were going to be involved in the campaign after the primary to the general, they were going to dictate to me what kind of campaign material we could use and what we couldn't use. I felt very strongly about those mandates to me. My father's response was, "Don't be afraid. We'll go out, and we'll do whatever we can. And don't give in because they're not asking you to do things that are right. It's wrong

for them to tell you how to campaign.” So that’s an example of my father always talking to me. When I had problems that I had, I would talk to him, and he would give me his point of view, which is always do what is right. Don’t be afraid.

WN: Would you characterize him as a risk taker?

GA: Mm-hmm [yes]. Always mindful of the fact that you got to feel that you’re right. You’re doing the right thing. Don’t be afraid if that’s how you feel.

WN: Can I ask you about your mother? What her background is and how she came to Hawai‘i.

GA: My mother was—her parents [Masajiro and Suma Yoshikawa] came to Hawai‘i ahead of time and went to the Big Island and worked on a sugar plantation out there. Until eighteen, she was out there [in Kumamoto, Japan], living with her aunts. She came to Hawai‘i. She was called here about the same time that my father came in 1919. My mother was called and came to Hawai‘i. She went to Big Island and stayed with her parents who were involved in plantation activities there [‘Ōla‘a, Hawai‘i Island].

MK: And what did she share about her life in Japan and her life in Hawai‘i in the early days?

GA: Her life in Japan is more the food that she began to eat: things that she ate in Japan like *dakujiru* and the kind of cooking that she did. She cooked for us and I recall my mother telling me—telling the whole family having dinner—she would say oh, “I don’t care very much for that kind of food so you folks go ahead and enjoy it.” That didn’t make me think a lot but after I grew up I started to think about, gee, this is so delicious. I enjoyed it so much. How come my mother didn’t enjoy it? I came to the conclusion it’s not that she didn’t enjoy it, but she wanted us to enjoy it and she wanted to tell us, “Go ahead and eat it. I’m not interested I don’t care for it,” you know?

It was that kind of caring effort. My mother never scolded me. But she always talked to me about what was right. She used to call me Ryoichi—Ryoichi, Ryo-*chan*, “You have to do things like this.” Or. “You have to not do this kind of thing.” She explained in great details some things that my father would be too busy to explain to me.

MK: So, if you had to look back on your childhood, who in your family would you consider the disciplinarian? Mom or Dad?

GA: I think both. Both tried to tell me what’s right and what’s wrong. Both tried to tell me to always do the right things. Always not bring shame to the family. Always acknowledge that somebody else participated in the things that you did.

MK: You know you mentioned that your mother’s family had come to work on the plantation. And I know that your father had left Japan on a ship. I was wondering, what was it like for your father’s family economically in Japan?

GA: I think my father because he came from Fukuoka and in kind of a country area, I think that they did okay. They had food, they grew things you know, even today in Japan. People in Tokyo when they have economic problems they suffer because they depend on their jobs and the companies but you go to the country area, they don’t feel the same

impact because they feel that they can grow things. They can survive and do things on their own without having to make a lot of money.

I think that's the kind of circumstance my father and my mother found themselves in. They were not wealthy, but they were able to survive because they were self-sufficient, growing many of the things they needed.

MK: We can tell that your mom and dad had a real strong values system. Again, I'm kind of curious, where did they get their values from? Or how?

GA: I don't know because my mother was eighteen when she came to Hawai'i and growing up there [in Japan] with her relatives—her aunts. My father was about twenty-four—twenty-three, twenty-four—years old when he came to Hawai'i on the ship. I don't know too much about their background except that they were from the country area. In general country area people, they have, relationships—the *mura* you know? The town, the group or place that they come from. They work together and do things together, so cooperative living, helping each other, understanding each other, was a very important part of their growing up. I think it's not only true with my mother, or my father, but I think it is true with the people who were growing up in Japan at that particular time.

My mother for example, the thing that I remember very closely about her is that she would tell me I shouldn't be doing this kind of stuff, I should be doing—and teaching me what was right and what was wrong. She never scolded me, always explained to me what was the right thing to do, what was not the right thing to do. But one of the things she really demanded of me was when I went out—anywhere I went—she had to know where I was going to. If I told her, "I'm going from here to my friend's house," and from my friend's house I decided I wanted to go someplace else, I had to come home. We didn't have telephones back in those days.

WN: (Laughs) No cell phones.

GA: No! I came home and I told my mom, I said, "Momma, I'm going from here—I'm going to certain place," and she always knew where I was.

WN: Did your father—was he as concerned about that? Or was it more that your mother's . . .

GA: No, it was more my mother. I think my father's more [concerned to] teach me the things that are important, the things that are right. My father for example was the one who really talked very strongly. My mother felt it too, but it was my father who told me how important education was. He told me, "Look at what I'm doing. I had education and went to the third grade. I do what I do now because I don't have the benefit of an education. But the future is going to be very different for you folks. The more education you have, the better off your life is going to be." He said that.

I learned from my father that education is a great equalizer, that no matter what family you come from, what your standing in the community is—your family's, you have an opportunity to become what you want to become, because of your own education.

So I remember when I was in eighth grade, and I had to study a vocation. I decided I wanted to become a lawyer. I went home and I told my father that and my father was overjoyed—he was so happy. My father told me, “*Hadaka ni nattemo. Yaraseru yo.*” It meant, “No matter even if I have to become naked, you can have the shirt off my back to make that possible.” So, I think my father was more on those kind of things that he felt—I felt—big things, important. The things that had to do with living was more responsibility of my mother.

WN: I see. Yeah. Your mother was more the day-to-day things.

GA: Yes.

WN: I see. I see.

Now in talking about your father’s and mother’s background here in Hawai‘i, I can’t help but think how unique it is because—not only because of why—the circumstances around him coming to Hawai‘i but the different kinds of jobs and where he lived were sort of unique and sort of different from the typical Japanese-in-Hawai‘i experience, because there’s no plantation . . .

GA: Yes. Right.

Well, in a sense I guess my father was kind of an entrepreneur. My mother and my father at one point started this *udon-ya*. A saimin shop you know? My father helped make the noodles. My father also was—in addition to being a stevedore—later on he, (pause) he was a stonemason. [GA’s father operated a rock quarry in Waimea Valley. C.W. Windstedt had the contract for quarry and road building from Waimea Bay to Kahuku.] He became very good at taking stones and being able to crack them into shapes that he wanted.

During my first grade [1932–1933] I lived in Lā‘ie. My father had a contract to work at the quarry out in Lā‘ie and in Kahuku. He supplied all the gravel to fix the road. My father ran that quarry and he went out and climbed up the mountain to break up the rocks. He used dynamite to break up the rock. But he would never let anyone else do that and he assumed the risk of going up and drilling the holes or whatever that he had to put the dynamite in and to set it off. So he did many things. Then he ran a laundry.

When the war started and we [were subject to] the limitations on things that the family could do, and from Smith Street we had to evacuate. My mother had a small restaurant there and we couldn’t continue to live on Smith Street so we had to evacuate and we went to my cousin’s farm in Mānoa. But my father went to work for a laundry and he developed some skills so he found out things he could do about treating the clothes, taking off stains, how to remove stains. From that experience he started a laundry. At the time I got involved in politics in 1954, my father was running a laundry [R & M Cleaners] in Kalihi on Colburn Street.

WN: Now you know you said your father—when you were born on Smith and Pauahi Street your father and mother had a tofu shop. Then he became a stevedore, stonemason at a

rock quarry. Are all of these entrepreneurial activities—did he have bosses at all at any of these stops?

GA: Stevedore he did. I recall having to go down by Pier 16 and looking at the board which indicated which ships were coming in, which gangs will be working. My father was number three gang—Sylvester Gang. So I would go there, find out, “Oh, tomorrow my father supposed to be there about seven o’clock,” and I would go back and tell him seven o’clock, stevedore at the certain pier. So, I did that.

But my father was very close to—I remember Sylvester [Carintho] who was his group leader, yeah? People used to talk about Sylvester Gang—Ariyoshi. People who tried to bully people around—get things from them—never touched my father who was part of the Sylvester Gang.

MK: Why did he send you to go look at the list?

GA: Because if I didn’t go he would have to go. He felt that it was a good thing for me to learn that. So I was able to go and I could tell which ships are coming in one day, next day what ship is coming in, what pier, who was going to be working.

MK: And when he was working on the rock quarry, who was he working with?

GA: He had about ten employees. They were truck drivers and they were people who could help load the truck with rocks. So we had a place by where the Mormon Tabernacle is now, out Lā’ie. We had, right on the corner there. My father built a wooden structure and half of it—the long wooden structure—half of it was the, places where the workers slept. The other half, half of it was like a dining room and my mother and a couple of ladies who were in that neighborhood also worked to provide all the food for them.

But when I think about the quarry operation I never knew how dangerous it would be for my father. I often think about what if I had known what would I have said to my father about going up—climb the mountains and inserting the dynamites there and blasting it.

MK: Did he ever tell you how he came to learn the skill?

GA: No. I think it, in many ways, it was. . . . things that he just did. For example one thing I remember very closely was, if you want to get a square, I remember his telling me, “three, four, five,” and that the geometric three-squared plus four-squared equals five-squared and that’s the square. I remember that very clearly because when I went to Michigan State, one summer I worked for a short while on a construction [crew]. They were talking about units square. The carpenter did not have a square, so I told him, “three plus four—three four and five.” He didn’t believe me. When we worked it out, then I told him, “Hey, that’s what my father told me!” That’s what he worked out.

Things that stood up---if you didn’t have. . . . What do you call that thing to, leverage . . .

WN: Level?

GA: Level. Yeah, level. He would tell me oh, “You get a string and you tie a nail away from that. You hold it up and you hold it up [word unclear] straight down. If you hold that then

it's level. Those kind of things that I learned from my father. I don't know where he'd learn that—I don't know how he got to know those things.

In my old home on Kawānanakoa Place we had a big pond and we raised koi in that pond. He created a Japanese garden and mountain-like and waterfall coming down. In order to do that, to create the waterfall it had to drop from one wall—rock—to another rock and those rocks are huge—four-, five-hundred-pound rocks. My father moved the rocks from one place to another. I couldn't do it myself now, but my father did that. I knew that he used leverage—how he was able to get the weight—he moved tremendous weight by leveraging a big iron bar that he had and he would put something and put the other side on. He could lift it up and he could kind of move it along gradually. When I looked later on at what he had done I marveled at how he—one person—could move around so much weight. Rocks that were so heavy, and place them all in conditions—locations—so that they would all work out. Water coming from here to this one and leveling off and coming down to another rock. I don't know where my father learned those things. . . . because he was a young person when he got on the ship.

WN: I'm just wondering if he learned a lot of these things in Japan or did he learn once he got here?

GA: I think he learned them after he got here. But he had to---I remember when we were on Smith Street he built a fishpond out there—he liked fishes, koi. So every place we went, we had a koi pond that he built. He always looked at how you move rocks together, how you form—and he told me he liked the word “*kokoro*.” He said that's how he tries to shape his pond, so that the outline of the word, the *kanji* “*kokoro*” [is formed].

WN: Now I know your father---you were born on Smith and Pauahi Streets, you moved to Waimea Valley where your father was working at the rock quarry. Then you moved to 'Āina Haina for a year or so. Then you moved to . . .

GA: To Wai'ālae.

WN: Wai'ālae. Oh yeah, why do I have 'Āina Haina? Wai'ālae. 'Ō'ili. 'Ō'ili, I'm sorry . . .

GA: 'Ō'ili Road.

WN: 'Ō'ili Road. Yeah. And then eventually to Lā'ie where your father also had the rock quarry. What was your father doing in Wai'ālae?

GA: He was a stonemason. I don't know where he worked but I know that he used to go work every day, and he worked as a stonemason. My former home, I gave that home to my son up on Kawānanakoa Place. My father built a . . . pillars, the foundation in a patio area there. It's still there. It's about two feet-wide square. When I look at it and I tell my son, “If you look at that, they're all huge rocks. They're not small rocks put together, they're big rocks put together.” Usually have small rock in between to kind of make it balanced. But it's an amazing piece of work and my father was able to do that. He always used to tell me that it's easy to make a wall with little rocks. You could look at the good rock—good walls—they have huge rocks, that are used. That's how he values the, worth of a stone wall. My father's very good at doing that.

WN: That's definitely a lost art.

GA: Mm-hmm [yes].

WN: At about age seven your family moved to Pālama. What I was just wondering, everyone associates you as a more of an urban person, but really for the first—up until that time—you were pretty much a rural kid.

GA: Mm-hmm [yes].

WN: What do you remember about growing up in these rural areas of Lā'ie and Wai'alae and Waimea Valley and so forth?

GA: I felt very close to my family when we were out in the country because everything we did was doing things together. (Pause) That's what I remember. Everything we did, we did together.

WN: I know that you lived amongst some of the workers and so forth. What was your house like, in Lā'ie?

GA: In Lā'ie? We had one-fourth of the whole building, yeah? Our windows for example, we had no glass windows. We had the panel that would come down and then during the day they'd push it up and get a stick to hold it up. Everything was very plain. Nothing fancy. We had no beds. I was thinking about whether we had beds there. Everything was on the floor—*futon*—roll out the *futon* and go to sleep there, and at night put it up. That's essentially the way I lived until the war broke out. When I was at Smith Street we did the same thing. We had---one room was a area room where we gathered. Roll out the round table, a small short table put it down there. We had dinner on the table—we ate on it. We used the table to study. When we were ready to go to bed, put it [the table] up and roll out the *futon*, to sleep on the *futon*. It was very efficient, economic use of space.

(Laughter)

MK: You know, when you look back to the times your family was in Lā'ie, I was wondering how many children were there in the family by that time?

GA: My older sister who died. Myself. Betty. (Pause) And Helen. Oh, my brother James. (Pause) And Helen was born in 1933.

MK: So she . . .

WN: You were already in Pālama by then.

MK: Yeah.

GA: Yes. So it was my older sister, Alice, myself, Betty, and Jimmy.

MK: Kind of a full family by that time.

GA: Yes.

MK: And then you also mentioned that your mother and some other women used to cook the food for the workers in Lā‘ie. So I was wondering what kind of work was your mom doing all those early years?

GA: I think that when she was on the Big Island, I think she was a barber also. (Pause) She worked with another lady cutting hair. (Pause) When we moved to Pālama and stayed in Hikina Lane for a short while. . . . from there my father and mother started this (pause) saimin shop they called Batten-ya.

MK: Oh. (GA laughs.) Batten-ya.

GA: Batten-ya.

MK: Because of the Kumamoto heritage?

GA: Yeah.

MK: *Batten. Batten* [Well-known Kumamoto dialect term for “but.”]. Oh! Very interesting! (GA chuckles.) By the way, how did your mom and dad communicate? They came from different parts of Japan.

GA: I think that my father and my mother got together on the Big Island and he was out there wrestling one time—sumo. You know it’s not they themselves coming together but because they were there and third parties arranging for them to come together and get married.

MK: Arranged marriage. A Fukuoka-*ken* person and a Kumamoto-*ken* person.

GA: Yes.

MK: I was kind of curious with the different dialects, Fukuoka-*ken* and Kumamoto-*ken*. What was spoken at home?

GA: Except for my grandmother [Suma Yoshikawa]—my mother’s mother—I think my mother, my father spoke like every other Japanese. I think the language spoken—Japanese—on the plantation was very different from the Japanese that my parents had spoke. So when I go to Japan and I speak—and basically that’s the way my parents had spoke—Japanese tell me that my Japanese is very different from many Japanese who come from Hawai‘i.

WN: And while growing up, what did you speak at home?

GA: A mixture of pidgin and Japanese.

WN: You think it was pretty much fifty-fifty? Or . . .

GA: Yeah. At that time the Japanese that I could put together so that my parents could understand me, and because they spoke in Japanese to me, I think I picked up Japanese. I went to Japanese[-language] school. Until the war broke out, I was in *chūgakkō*, *yonensei*

[middle school, fourth year] when the war broke out. So that's in the tenth grade that the war broke out. Until then, I went to Japanese school.

WN: Which Japanese school was this?

GA: Pālama . . .

WN: Oh, Pālama Gakuen.

GA: Pālama—no—Pālama Nippongo Gakuen. There were two Pālama Japanese schools, Pālama Gakuen and Pālama Nippongo Gakuen.

WN: And where was Pālama Nippongo Gakuen?

GA: It's right next to Robello [Lane]. Ka'iulani School. Back of Ka'iulani School, between Ka'iulani School and right now Dillingham Boulevard. Where the community college [Honolulu Community College] is now located, that's where the Pālama Nippongo Gakuen was located.

WN: And you lived on Hikina Lane, was that where you were most of—while you were in Pālama?

GA: Yes. Yes.

MK: What was Pālama like back then?

GA: Pālama was. . . and I use the word “gang” lightly, yeah? We had Hikina Lane Gang and Robello Lane Gang and that means we all played or grouped together. What I remember carefully was when I came back from Lā'ie and my first day in Japanese[-language] school my mother took me to register. Went to the principal's office and registered and principal took me to the first-grade classroom and the teacher graded me and put me on my seat. I was shy. I didn't talk to anybody. I didn't look towards anybody. When I came out somebody grabbed me by the shirt—like this. I was shocked, I didn't know what was happening. The guy grabbed my shirt and start to push me around. Just automatically, I responded and I got into a fight with him. Later on I found out that he was second grade bull. And he was trying to show me, you know, assert the fact that he was the second grade bull.

Because of that incident, I had many, many fights my second and third grade and fourth grade years. At one point, one fight that I got into, the principal told me to not come back to school until my parents came with me. So I went to them and I told my mother. My mother asked me, “Did the principal ask you why, what had happened?”

I said, “No.”

So she told me, “Then, we'll change school.”

I went from Pālama Nippongo Gakuen to Fort Gakuen. (Pause) Fort Gakuen was an elementary school and from there I went for my seventh grade year to Hawai'i Chūgakkō. Now, there was a Hawai'i Chuō Gakuin and Hawai'i Chūgakkō. At the

Hawai'i Chūgakkō we had to wear coat. So we all wear black coats every day. So I went to Central Intermediate, and had to bring my black coat. I had to put on my black coat to go to Japanese[-language] school.

MK: Yeah, I always wondered when kids went to Hawai'i Chūgakkō, where did you leave your coat during the day?

GA: (Pause) We carried it around!

(Laughter)

WN: We ask everybody this question.

GA: I carried it around. I went to [word unclear] to shop class—we had no lockers—so I had to carry my coat, put it down there and then when I was through pick it up and go to my next class. Put it together with my books on my next class on the table.

My father, when I was in sixth grade, he used to buy boxing gloves and punching bags. So we used to do a lot of boxing amongst the people there. My father wanted me to take judo after that. So I take judo but my father would not let me do any boxing. I couldn't take part in any tournament. He would not let me go to any judo *shiai*. I wondered about that and how come all my—my father he goes to sumo and why can't I go judo.

Later on, I found out that because I had gotten into some fights when I was younger, he did not want me to learn boxing and do judo as a way of taking it out on anybody. So he did not want me—even on *shiai*, tournament or even boxing matches—to, for me to use it against somebody else. So, it was only until I got older that I began to understand. Now, when I . . . I never took part in boxing matches but I worked out at Michigan State when I was there but the boxing team, you know? When I came home I told my father that, I said, "Papa, I did a little boxing not boxing matches but I did work at a team and I sparred."

When I told my father that, his response was, "*Wakkatteitayo*." I knew. He knew, but he felt that it was okay at that point that I was beyond the age when I was going to take it out on anybody else.

MK: When you were doing—say—boxing as a kid, where did you go for boxing lessons or to work out?

GA: Around the neighborhood. Friends that came over. We used to spar. Not really spar—hurt anybody—but I have a friend who was boxing at the CYO [Catholic Youth Organization] Gym. From time to time I would go with him to see what was going on at the gym.

MK: How about judo? Where would you do judo?

GA: At Hawai'i Chūgakkō. I started in Pālama, Fort Gakuen initially. But, when I became serious as a Hawai'i Chūgakkō *ichinensei*, I learned—went to—judo, they had three days a week. Very strict, and today judo is taught very differently. But at that time, judo was not just learning how to fall or throw people, it was discipline. So when we got to the judo-*ba* immediately after we stepped in there, we had to behave. We had to sit properly.

I recall one time when we got there early, some of us decided to play football at the judo-*ba*. The instructor came and oh, he bawled us out, lined us up and he gets through all of us down, “Bomp bomp bomp.” He told us that once you step into the judo-*ba*, you got to behave. It’s not just learning how to fall, learning how to throw people, but learning how to sit and how to behave. The discipline part.

MK: How much of that martial arts or judo discipline stayed with you?

GA: I think it stayed throughout my life. I remember the first couple of weeks when all of us got stiff necks. All we had to do was pile on our back and put our head up. We had to do that for ten minutes and then put it down. Ten minutes you had to do that for five or six ten-minute sessions. After the first day, everybody had stiff neck. But, we were required to do the same thing with the stiff neck. What we were learning to do was when you fall, your head was always up. You don’t hurt your head when you fall. I think that helped me in some falls that I had. I might have gotten hurt except that I had the training where my head was protected.

WN: What kind of a student were you in Japanese-language school?

GA: We all went because our parents told us to go, but in that process we also learned I guess. I was in Hawai‘i Chūgakkō and at the intermediate school too the principal wanted me to come back because he thought I was a good student. Many, many years I went without being absent from school for a single day of absence. I think we all did that. We went to school feeling not-too-good but we all went to school anyway. I think I was a good student at Hawai‘i Chūgakkō because the principal came back and asked whether or not I was a good student—he wanted me to come back—but my mother told him we had already changed school. I went to Fort Gakuen.

At Hawai‘i Chūgakkō we had three classes. *Ichinensei*, *chugakko ichinensei*. *Ichino-ichi*, *ichi-no-ni*, and *ichi-no-san*. We were all placed in *ichi ni san* based upon our grade. I was always in *ichi-no-ichi*. When I went second grade, *ni-no-ichi*, so until my fourth grade I was in *ichi*. I think I was a fairly good student. I learned Japanese even though we felt we weren’t very serious about it.

(Laughter)

MK: We know that in those days at the Japanese-language schools, students were taught *shūshin*. What are your memories of *shūshin* in classes?

GA: I thought *shūshin* was very important because it taught us morals and discipline—what was right and what was wrong. How you do things and get along with people. I was very surprised when I found out that in Japan *shūshin* was eliminated and it’s no longer being taught in Japan. I used to tell people, “How come?” I think *shūshin* is the most important part of Japanese. Learning a language is important, but to me the values—learning what was right and what was wrong and how you get along with people—to me those were very important things that one had to learn. I felt that *shūshin* was the most important subject matter in Japanese school.

MK: How did they teach you *shūshin*?

GA: We learned about—you know for example—we learned some stories that I remember. How the parents gave a bow to each of three children and told them to see if they could break the bow. They each broke it—the three of them. He said, “Now,” he puts three bows together and he gave it to each child said, “Now you break it.” The three bows together cannot, could not, be broken. The moral of the story is, if you work together you can do many things that you would not be able to individually. A story I told once to somebody, showed up in a Japanese *shūshin* book talking about values. It was a story about me saying to somebody else how people are trying to hurt the dog. I told them, “Hey, don’t do that,” because a dog hasn’t done anything bad to you. I stopped them from doing that. So that story came out in a Japanese textbook. How that story came from me who became governor of Hawai‘i at one point.

WN: What about other lessons in Japanese school? For example, Ninomiya Kinjiro? Does that ring a bell?

GA: No, I don’t. . . .

WN: Oh, Ninomiya Kinjiro was a scholar. Studied very, very hard.

GA: Uh-huh (chuckles).

MK: You’d often see statues of him with the stack of wood piled on his back. Book in one hand, and lantern in another. I guess he was the model of working hard and being studious.

GA: Unfortunately, I don’t remember him.

(Laughter)

WN: Let’s talk about English school [public schools in Hawai‘i] now. You went to Robello School for one grade—second grade.

GA: Second grade, right.

WN: And then you switched over to Ka‘iulani School.

GA: Robello School was only grades one and two.

WN: Grade one and two.

GA: So automatically all of us went to Ka‘iulani School.

WN: Oh, Robello was only one and two, I see.

GA: Yes. And Ka‘iulani School was from third to the sixth grade.

WN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So how was Robello School?

GA: Okay. (Laughs) Robello School was where I really learned to read. We learned reading in the first grade too, but it was at Robello School where they really emphasized reading and

I learned to read a lot in Robello School. By the time I got to kindergarten, I had developed reading skills and desire to read books.

WN: How would you compare English school at Robello School and Japanese-language school? Which one did you enjoy more? Number one.

GA: I think I enjoyed elementary school—Japanese school. I enjoyed very much, because we had one teacher—same teacher. We got to know the teacher well. I remember the one teacher I remember very well, Serizawa-*sensei*. I liked her. I thought she [Nao Serizawa, mother of GA's contemporary in state legislature, Toshio Serizawa] was very interesting, the stories that she told us in Japanese. I think Japanese school and Robello—English school were very different. I think Japanese school, that's more—the teacher is more involved in talking to us and telling us stories. Whereas in Robello School—second grade Robello School—we were given books to read and what we could read formed the base of information that we got.

WN: Did you feel that Japanese school and English school complimented each other or were they sort of tug-of-war? In terms of values and lessons . . .

GA: For me I think it complemented each other. Because, *shūshin* for example were not taught in the second grade. Japanese school, they did, we had *shūshin*. Japanese school, the teacher spoke to us more about stories and having us talk to each other. It was teacher-parent, this kind of conversation. Whereas in Robello School, it was more students left alone. Teachers told us what to do, and we were left alone to do what we had to do.

WN: And you talked about moving when you moved from Lā'ie to Pālama, and then you went to Japanese-language school and then you went to Robello School and then you got into some fights based on—this is more Japanese school. What about English school? Was there a problem moving from a rural area to this urban area?

GA: No. I had no problem in Ka'iulani School or Robello School. It was just that one fight with the second grade bully that started it all.

(Laughter)

WN: Were you teased at all for being like a country jack or anything like that?

GA: No, just that I fought with him and now I'm his enemy. He had friends too. (Chuckles) Because he was a bully he had friends. I remember having to fight one of his friends. Every time I fought with him, then I had to go—he lived in Robello Lane. So the following week I had to go walk toward—through—Robello Lane and his older brother would be waiting for me.

(Laughter)

MK: You mentioned that you lived in Hikina Lane. What was Hikina Lane like?

GA: Hikina Lane . . .

WN: Oh, we're going to—just a minute we're going to—we're going to have to change tapes.

TC: Yeah, we need to take a little break to change tape. Does anyone want to take a break, stand up, or . . .

WN: Yeah, I'd like to take a break.

MK: How are you, Governor? Are you okay?

GA: I'm okay.

WN: I hope you're enjoying this.

GA: Yes.

TC: I'm enjoying it, and I thought I knew this man pretty well. I'm really enjoying this.

WN: Very interesting.

MK: I read the story about that bully getting to you at school, but for some reason I assumed that occurred in English school. It was Japanese-language school!

GA: Japanese---yeah, Japanese school.

MK: That's interesting. You know a long time ago I interviewed Dr. Kimura. He used to have a practice in Kalihi. Dr. Kimura?

GA: Minoru Kimura?

MK: Yeah. And the thing is that, his family used to work for the Holt family way back in Mākaha Valley. So they came from the country and came to Pālama. In his era, he said, "Pālama was so tough and we had the Pālama Gang versus the Kaka'ako Gang," and he said he had to be—try to be—tough. The time that he went to school, they had the Spanish flu, and he was going to Robello School, and he got it. He got the Spanish flu but he somehow survived it. And he told us that his teachers who had seen so many kids and families affected by the flu—they were so pleased to just see him survive, and he said "They hugged me and everything and said 'Minoru, you're back.'" But, life in Pālama was different.

GA: You know, the gangs that we had—we had Robello Gang, Hikina Lane Gang, Auld Lane Gang. They were not for fighting purposes. They didn't fight one gang to another gang. It was fighting that was really individual.

WN: Maybe we should wait until, let's get this on tape.

MK: Yeah, we'll have you discuss that.

WN: I just wanted to ask you when you talked about the Batta---the restaurant.

MK: Batten-ya.

WN: Was that over in Pālama or was that when you moved over to .Street—Chinatown?

GA: Both. My mother had a restaurant, the *udon-ya* in Pālama.

WN: So this is different from . . .

MK: And that was Batten-ya?

GA: Batten-ya. Batten-ya.

MK: Batten-ya.

GA: And then we went to Smith Street and that's a different restaurant.

WN: Oh, a different restaurant?

GA: A small, more---all kinds of food yeah?

WN: Okay I did not have that in Pālama. So this was a *udon-ya*.

GA: *Udon-ya*. Pālama. Yeah.

WN: What was the name of that place?

GA: Batten-ya.

WN: Oh, Batten-ya but what was the name of the restaurant when in Chinatown?

MK: Smith Street.

GA: We, didn't have a name.

MK: Oh! (Laughs.)

WN: It was just "the restaurant."

GA: Yeah.

WN: When we asked—when we interviewed [Fujio] "Fudge" Matsuda. His family had a saimin stand in Kaka'ako and we asked him, "What's the name of the restaurant?" (Laughs.) He couldn't really—it didn't have a name. (GA chuckles.)

WN: It was "the restaurant."

MK: Funny that your family restaurant in Pālama was called Batten-ya because *batten*, *batten* that's a term you associate with Kumamoto-*ken* people.

GA: Right.

MK: So I thought, "Oh, interesting!"

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, we're continuing our interview session number one with Governor George Ariyoshi on May 7.

Governor during the break we were talking about the gangs that you were—that sort of frequented Pālama or were part of Pālama. Tell us about what that was.

GA: The gangs were actually groups coming together and were not for the purpose of fighting with somebody else. But it was just internally, we called ourselves “Hikina Lane Gang” because the young kids—any kind of lane—were all together whenever we did things. Same thing with Robello Lane, Auld Lane, and Desha Lane. That's what it was. Not this fighting thing. As a matter of fact, when I went to McKinley later on—at McKinley High School we had gangs too. But at that time gangs were Kaka'ako Gang, Mānoa Gang. Even there the gangs were not so much for fighting with each other. In fact, I remember when there were fights between—conflict between—members of the gangs. Two sides got together and they always talked about, “Okay, you going to fight that guy. Fair fight,” and the gangs were there to be sure that it was a fair fight between two individuals.

The gangs during my time were not for fighting. No weapons or anything like that. They talked about fair fight between two individuals. Nobody jumping in to go help anybody else. But when I think back now, how different they were to gangs today. More violent yeah? More weapons. During my time, I never knew of weapons being used.

MK: You mentioned that Hikina Lane Gang, Auld Lane Gang, Robello Lane Gang. They're just groups of kids who did things. What did you folks do?

GA: Well, in my case from Hikina Lane we could come out from. . . . King Street . . .

TC: We have to stop.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

GA: Okay, Hikina Lane started on King Street and went in towards the (pause) Dillingham Boulevard side. At that time when we were there, that whole area where the community college now is used to be what we referred to as “desert.” Nothing, no structures, it's all open and. . . . Hikina Lane and. . . . not Robello Lane but Desha Lane all would go into this open area. It was bushes and we used to make holes in that place and put, rubbish in there cover it up and like a trap in case someone walked into it they would fall—they would fall into the hole.

(Laughter)

GA: We had strings attached to cans. Somebody would come to ring—pull the string and on the other side the can, with some rocks or whatever in there would make noise to indicate that somebody's coming. So we played that kind of game. It wasn't because of, or involved with the conflict with somebody coming, but just to indicate “Oh somebody's walking through here.”

That whole area, when it rained, the ground area would rise because it's all very salty. After a fresh rain and after it dried up, you would walk into it and it would be—it would

stomp down. The salt would break down. That's the kind of thing we had, and we—Hikina Lane people and Desha Lane people also—ended up in that area. So we played games among ourselves, just being very patient, "Oh somebody's coming down now." Good thing we set the schedule to ring the bell.

WN: Did Hikina Lane go all the way to Dillingham [Boulevard]?

GA: You could go all the way to Dillingham [Boulevard], but that area became Hikina Lane. Hikina Lane and up to Dillingham [Boulevard] was this old area that we all knew as the "desert." We used to call it the desert.

MK: Did you folks play games like *peewee* or throw Bull Durham bags at each other or what kind of games did you folks play over there?

GA: We played Bull Durham. We put the weed, but sometimes we cheated. We put small rocks in there.

(Laughter)

GA: Because it'd go straighter and harder yeah? And we would play games, make a round, round circle and somebody would find people. When we find the person, that person became "it." We all go after the person. Try to hit the person with the Bull Durham bag. So we played those kind—the *peewee*. We played those *peewee* games. Marbles. We used to call them agates.

WN: *Peewee*. Was there a big enough field for you to play *peewee*?

GA: Oh yeah. *Peewee* does not require a lot of space. We could play that even in the Japanese school yard. The space is more what we needed when you put it up and you hit. The distance that it could go is what the distance that you needed. So we played *peewee*. Agates. That, make a round, round circle and somebody would start the game.

WN: What about the . . .

GA: We used to make our own toys.

WN: Like what kind of toys? Tops, did you make tops?

GA: You know clothespin? We used a clothespin and then small beans that we had that we could find around back in those days. With those clothespins we would make it so we could make a gun. We could fire things off there. We used to make, thread spools. We would use rubber band and sticks so we could make it roll. We would cut wood, and make it so that we could get one end open, put rubber band, and put a piece of a tiny board panel and turn them around like this. So when you put it on the quarter and you let go, that thing would, you know, and it would push the small boat you made forward.

Back in those days we had, everybody had access to tubes. People had automobiles, was all tubes—now all tubeless. But back in those days we had tubes. Lots of tubes around. We would cut the tubes and we would make—use the rubber band to make rifles out of it. We'd have a strip of wood and kind of shape it. And then, around there we'd make cuts.

WN: Like notches?

GA: Notches, yeah. Put a string from the front to the end. Put a rubber band on the string, push it down so that it went into the notch. So what we did was you could go and pull one notch and go (makes a shooting sound). Get one shot off. Pull some other notch and get next shot off. We had one gun—rifle—like that with maybe three notches. So we'd have three shots. One shot each would get one, one of those bands.

WN: And what would you use for ammunition?

GA: The rubber band.

WN: Oh, shoot the rubber band, I see.

GA: Yeah. Shoot the rubber band out. We used to do a paper bag—we'd get paper—and fold it up—make small paper—and fold it up and kind of make tight. Make a small---bend it, and we'd get regular plastic rubber band and we'd get it on one side, hook it up, and go (makes a shooting sound).

WN: A slingshot.

GA: Yeah. It was sore. You know the thing you tie it up and make it real tight. You hit and it's sore.

We used to make slingshot. Find---cut the trees branches up so that we could get the Y [shape] make slingshots. . . . So we did all kinds of things making our own toys.

We used to get can. In those days, when I was in Wai'alae we had a plant that had beans and the beans are very sticky. So we'd peel off and we'd put them on the can—no, the bottom of the can. We put that thing on. Turn it over. Now, the sticky part is facing up. We'd stand on it and it would be stuck to our feet and we would walk around like that.

We made stilts. We'd get a tall stick and just put one piece on there and we could walk around on stilts and be way high. So we found ways to entertain ourselves though because we didn't have—weren't able to buy toys.

WN: What about tops? Did you make tops?

GA: Yeah, tops. And the top, what we'd try to do was remove the original. . . . nail that's sticking out and we'd take a fresh new nail—we'd really shine it, polish it, and make it really sharp and long—and we put that on. We'd fight tops. We would throw and then try to get somebody's top down there and we'd try to throw and aim it and land it on there to make a mark on their top. I knew how to throw the top and then go and pick it up under my fingers. And go over there and drop it.

(Laughter)

WN: So it was spinning on your palm?

GA: Yeah.

WN: And then you would drop it on somebody else's. (Laughs)

GA: Yeah. What we learned to do was, we'd spin the top and it's spinning some place, we could just go down there and just (makes a shooting sound) and let it jump off your hands.

WN: Wasn't it sore?

GA: No.

(Laughter)

GA: Well, depends on how sharp. The really sharp ones we wouldn't do. With longer we couldn't do it anyway because it was too—what we had to do was go here and the top had to be fairly close by and not too long. So we could take it and lift it right onto . . .

WN: Up with your finger. I see.

GA: I'm thinking about all of a sudden you're asking me these things. (MK laughs.)

WN: Now in Pālama, now were there like trees—fruit trees—that you picked?

GA: Plum trees. We had plum trees but plenty in Pālama.

WN: What kind of plum was this?

GA: It was a (pause) about, about an inch long. Maybe three-quarters of an inch wide—round, purplish. We had to be very careful because if that touched your clothes it stained your clothes. So that plum tree was very prevalent and there were some places where they had guava trees. We knew which guava trees were sweet and which ones were sour.

MK: This is in Pālama?

GA: In Pālama. Uh-huh. The Pālama---the plum trees were in somebody's yard. But, it was all open to everybody. The owners—they let everybody come and pick the Pālama plums.

I recall also a stream. That stream now—Pālama Stream—is big, and they have both sides with concrete. But back in those days it was many tributaries. And small streams coming through and we used to catch rainbow fishes, rainbow fish, yeah. Oh swordtail. We didn't have 'o'opus there.

WN: . . . the big eyed. No, no more.

GA: No.

MK: Or crayfish?

GA: Crayfish, yeah. Crayfish.

WN: And where did you folks swim?

GA: Pālama gym. Pālama Settlement. That's where I learned to swim. In the Pālama Settlement pool. We had somebody teaching us how to swim, how to breathe and so forth. But one day, my kids swam for [Takashi] "Halo" Hirose Town Swim Club. They were swimming, and one day I was swimming with them and Halo Hirose tell me oh, "You're swimming Kapālama style, yeah?"

(Laughter)

WN: Meaning what I wonder.

GA: Meaning that it was not good form.

(Laughter)

WN: I mean, it wasn't dog paddle or anything like that?

GA: But it's regular stroking, but I wasn't stroking like the others who swam very well—very smooth swimming.

WN: Were there places in the stream that you could swim?

GA: No, nothing that deep. So, most of our swimming we went to. Pālama Settlement—oh, I know—before and we used to go to where Pier 16 used to be. Not too many ships there—the pier was elevated. We could go down and there was a sandbar—lots of sand there—and so we used to swim from there.

Along the way we used to stop at Love's Bakery. Love's Bakery for five cents I think it was, we could buy a whole box of day-old pastries. That's what they bought and we took with us and then when we went swimming we would eat the pastries. They were good stuff. Long johns, snails, *an*-doughnut, apple doughnut. But the whole box for about five cents and we would all—you know back in those [days] one penny was a lot of money and not everybody had a penny. So we'd throw in what we could fit. Buy for five cents, buy a whole maybe fifteen, twenty doughnuts, a box full of the doughnuts and pastries.

WN: I'm wondering did you folks or what did you folks do for money? Were there opportunities to get money here and there as kids?

GA: No. Our parents gave us money. But, we would get the penny or two from them. That was big money. We didn't get it every day.

MK: You mentioned like they had Love's Bakery. In the Pālama area where you live . . .

GA: No, it was down by (pause), by the waterfront. Nimitz. Nimitz. In that area.

MK: So Love's was farther yeah?

GA: Yeah. And because we going right across the street—Pier 16. Pier 16 at that time, the water was not oily. The sand was very clean. So we could swim there.

WN: So this is before the harbor was fully developed?

GA: I think there were ships coming in, but not that many.

WN: Ah, I see.

GA: Sand Island was not developed the way it was.

MK: Did you folks go down to Sand Island to go swim?

GA: No. We never went to Sand Island. It was all Pier 16.

MK: And then you know in the Pālama area, I was curious about what kinds of businesses there were.

GA: All small business like *udon-ya*. Small (pause) sundries shops, but they're all very small—mom and pop kind of shops you know.

MK: Where was your mom's Batten-ya?

GA: Batten-ya, 676 North King Street. I remember the address.

WN: King Street?

GA: On King Street. Pua Lane. It was about three or four shops from Pua Lane on King Street. It was on the *mauka* side of King Street. On Pua Lane across on the lower side of King Street there was a theater, Robello Theater.

(Pause) There was a church on Pua Lane, and still is there—old Hawaiian church.

WN: What church was there?

MK: Kaumakapili?

WN: No, Kaumakapili was. . . .

GA: Something like that, yeah.

WN: Kaumakapili is more by Pālama Settlement. But maybe. . . .

GA: This covered the whole block. On King. Pua. And I don't know what this other street was, but it was on King Street.

MK: Might be Kaumakapili, near present-day Tamashiro Market. It's near there. Right across from Ka'iulani School.

GA: Yeah, near Tamashiro Market across the street from . . .

WN: Ka'iulani School.

GA: Uh-huh. Across Ka'iulani School. Tamashiro Market was not there at that time.

MK: Yeah. Not yet. Not yet.

WN: So tell us about the Batten-ya. What was it like? The restaurant.

GA: We had maybe two tables and some chairs. We couldn't seat more than half-a-dozen people. I think half-a-dozen it was full.

My mother used to tell me that the quality of the noodles depends on two things. One, the noodle itself and the dashi—wow the dashi was made. I recall my mother had a lot of the seaweed, *konbu* [kelp], *ebi* [shrimp].

WN: *Katsuo* [shipjack tuna]?

GA: Not so much *katsuo*.

WN: Not so much *katsuo*.

GA: I recall only the *ebi*—the big *ebi*. And then the *konbu*. But they used a lot of *konbu* and a lot of *ebi*.

MK: It must have tasted good.

(Laughter)

MK: And then her noodles were what, *udon*, *soba*, or *saimin*?

GA: *Udon*. *Udon*.

MK: *Udon*.

GA: They were all made---my father helped to knead that. He told me that the value of the *udon* comes from how much you can knead it. The more you knead it, the more—so what he had was on one end he had a two-by-four like this. He had wood about this thick, about maybe five, six inches—or maybe a little, five inches—round. He would attach it to—not attach it but put it under—this two-by-four that he had sticking out. And then from this side he would just go—just press it down and knead it.

MK: That was like, authentic. *Teuchi* [handmade] *udon*. Very authentic.

GA: Right.

MK: Who would come to eat at your mom's place?

GA: People who work around there. People who lived around there would come.

MK: How much was a bowl of *udon*?

GA: I don't recall. But I presume it must have been very cheap, because right next to us there was a bakery—Taira Bakery. For five cents you could get four *an*-donut or apple donut. Or two long, big long johns. You could get a pie for five cents. So, that Taira Bakery, my

parents' *udon-ya*, and next to the barbershop. And the ladies cut my hair and I don't even know what they charged. It could not have been very much.

MK: Any other businesses nearby?

GA: Yeah. Next there to that was a small shop that sold candies and confectionaries. Beyond that on the corner was a beer hall—bar. Oyama family that sold beer there. On this side next to the barbershop (pause) Maruho-ya—large department store [run by the Horiuchi family]. It was large for us at that time but today it would be very common. Just one shop selling all kinds of food, groceries, market things.

There was a lane there I don't know what the lane was called, but across the lane they had *furo*. *Furo*. I remember Vincent Yano's parents had a tailor shop next to them. [Vincent Yano later became a legislator.] We enjoyed going to the *furo*. We used to buy ticket and we'd go *furo*. And enjoyed playing, jumping into the big *furo*.

(Laughter)

WN: So you wash yourself outside first . . .

GA: Right.

WN: . . . and then jump in.

GA: Right. We knew also that we wash our towels, were never to be taken in there. The towels we left out, you know.

WN: Now, you were—this is a community *furo* for the area. What did you folks have in your house? Did you have a small *furo* for the family?

GA: No, we didn't have any *furo*. In fact, when I went to Smith Street, we didn't have our own bathtub also. It was community bath. So, when we used that place my mother would get a big tub and she would get hot water. We always had water—charcoal you know—in a kettle. She would pour in the hot water into the [tub]—and that was our *furo* when we went *furo* there.

But most of the time, we went to *furo* on Beretania Street and there was a *furo-ya* over there. That was a big one. Bigger than the Pālama one. We would by playing in Children's Park and say, "Oh time to go *furo* today!" at five o'clock so we [four or five of us boys] all go down five o'clock. We walk in, the manager was very concerned because we would go and we'd jump into the pool—to the *furo*.

(Laughter)

WN: Men and women of course were separated. But how were they separated?

GA: Two separate entry, and the wall separating. The only part was, in the center there was a—cold water. The cold water. If you wanted to peep, you could see the other side. We would see some men trying to do that and we'd say, "Eh the guy, he's trying to peep."

(Laughter)

MK: Going back to where your mother's Batten-ya was. What was across the street? You gave us an idea of what was in that row. What was across the street?

GA: I think there was an *okazu-ya*. But that's all I can remember, just the *okazu-ya*.

MK: All the businesses you've described, they're all Japanese.

GA: All Japanese.

MK: It was all Japanese?

GA: All Japanese. In fact, Pālama Lane. . . . Desha Lane. . . . Robello Lane were all Japanese. Hikina Lane I remember one Chinese family, but not Chinese boy—not the youngster. It was an older family.

I remember Puerto Rican. The reason why I remember the Puerto Rican house was because they would have Puerto Rican dancing from time to time. The fast music and they would have a lot of Puerto Ricans come dancing at that house there. That was in Hikina Lane.

But now when you mention it, every business: that Oyama beer hall, I don't remember the name of the small confectionary store, the Taira Bakery, our *udon-ya* next to the barbershop—Nakagawa—Lady Nakagawa's a barber. And then Maruho-ya Japanese owned. The *furo*, Japanese owned. Vince Yano's family, the tailor shop.

MK: All Japanese. Were your parents members of the Pālama Merchant's Association or anything like that?

GA: No. No organization in those days. No organization of any kind.

MK: You mentioned Vince Yano's family having the tailor shop. Did you know the young Vince Yano back then?

GA: I did not know him then. Vince was a little older than me but I knew of the younger Yanos. But I didn't play with them. I played at the Taira Bakery, the Nakagawa—the barbershop had a—Kenichi was one year older than me. That beer hall—Oyama—they had one son one year older than me and one son younger than me.

WN: So these are kids that are not part of the Hikina Lane Gang.

GA: No.

WN: So you then sort of branched out.

GA: Right. We used to play *katana*.

MK: Sword?

GA: Yeah sword. We'd play *katana*.

WN: You mean what, sticks, or . . .

GA: Yeah, with sticks. We wouldn't fight to hit the other person but kind of land softly. "Oh yeah I got you!"

(Laughter)

MK: You mentioned that there was a theater in Pālama.

GA: Yes.

MK: Did you go and what did you see?

GA: We saw cowboy movies.

MK: Cowboy movies?

WN: Tom Mix.

GA: Yeah, cowboy movies. . . . It was the theater. One out towards Kalihi. The other this way. No other theater. It was a very prominent theater service to many people there. When I went to Smith Street, we used to go to many theaters. There was a theater on—Roosevelt Theatre—on Maunakea Street. Liberty Theatre on Nu'uanu Street.

WN: Nu'uanu, right.

GA: Hawai'i Theatre on Bethel. Princess Theatre on. . . .

WN: Fort.

GA: Fort.

WN: King Theatre on King Street.

GA: King Street. Uh-huh. So lots of theaters in that neighborhood.

MK: How about Japanese movie theaters?

GA: Oh yeah. By River Street, College Walk there was a Japanese theater. We used to go see Japanese movies from time to time. Koji Tsuruta. Akamine, Akamine. . . .very well known movie actress. . . .

MK: Oh, Takamine Hideko.

GA: Takamine Hideko, yeah. Takamine Hideko. Koji Tsuruta. I remember those. (Chuckles)

MK: Since you mentioned playing with *katana*, I thought, "Maybe he went to see the old *chanbara* movies."

GA: Yeah we went and saw that too. (Laughs)

I don't remember the person but he was a little older, he was also very good at *katana*. He would always beat us.

(Laughter)

GA: We had no technique, "Ah! Just go!"

WN: Maybe he took kendo lessons.

GA: No, I didn't take kendo. He did I think.

WN: Maybe he did, yeah.

GA: Yeah, he did I think.

MK: Gee, your childhood is just so different. So different from your own children's or your grandchildren's.

GA: Mm-hmm, very different. But I try to recreate some things, like the rubber band shooting. I taught my grandson how to do that, but I told him, "Be very careful. I don't want you to shoot at anything. You shoot at the target but not at people, because it's sore," and I told him, "If you're careful because this can hit someone's eyes, that's very dangerous." So I taught him how to do that.

He was working on a project in school where he had to create—and his project was launching. He'd put something and then launch the thing and he'd put it down and (makes a whoosh sound). I told him—he was trying to make it mobile—so I told him oh, "Grandpa used to get a spooled thread and make that like a wheel." I showed him about that and he put it together himself and made that. I told him about the rifle that we used to do. But we couldn't find any tire. It's hard to find tires today.

MK: That's right yeah?

WN: Oh with tubes in it, yeah. They don't make tubes . . .

GA: Yeah, they don't have tubes that's why.

WN: I guess rubber bands had to do, huh?

GA: Yeah.

(Laughter)

GA: I wanted to show him the beans with a clothespin, and how to make a gun with that. But I didn't because I was afraid someone might get hurt. It's dangerous, with the beans. In the process of loading it sometimes the beans fly off. As a child doing it myself I didn't realize how dangerous it could be.

WN: These are like *kiawe*? *Kiawe* bean.

GA: No. (Pause) Oh yeah, I think they are *kiawe* beans.

WN: *Kiawe*. Yeah.

GA: Back in those days, they had those beans all over. In fact when I went to—after the fiftieth anniversary of the Iwo Jima battle, the *Sumo Kyōkai* Japan were going over and have some wrestling matches and Akebono was going, Takanohana was going. They invited me to come along. I told Ambassador [Mike] Mansfield about that and he says, “You’ll be the American representative and you’ll go give a talk out there.” So I went and when I got there I found out that the same *kiawe* beans were used to clear the islands. Iwo Jima at one point with so many people dead—so many dead bodies—it was really stink. So they smelled so bad that they didn’t want to have people going over and clean up the island. What they did was scattered the beans—*kiawe* beans—all over the island. That grew and that cleaned up the island.

MK: That’s something.

WN: Did you work at all in the restaurant? Or did any of your siblings work?

GA: No, it was just my mother. She made *okazu*, tempura, sushi, and things. She was the one who sold. . . .

MK: When your mother had Batten-ya and your father would make the *udon*, did he do other work besides . . .

GA: Yeah, he was a stevedore.

MK: He was a stevedore at that time.

GA: Yeah. Later on he became a stonemason. (Pause) Wait now, he was a stonemason before that.

MK: You said before?

GA: Before that he was a stonemason.

WN: So it’s pretty much your mother’s restaurant.

GA: Mm-hmm.

WN: I was wondering in the Pālama neighborhood, was it—to what extent was it a community? What kinds of celebrations or special occasions did the community participate in?

GA: Very little. If anything it was just neighbors in that area where we lived. Family barbershop and *udon-ya* and those people. That family that had the *okazu-ya* across the street, it was more or less people getting together like that. The parent, the mothers getting together. But no formal organization.

WN: What about New Year's? What was New Year's like?

GA: My parents---we blew up fireworks. Especially at twelve o'clock we really put up. . . . But after twelve o'clock, we all went to *o-furo* to cleanse the body and we had new clothes. Everything really completely new. We went to *omiyamairi* [shrine visiting]. Kompira-san and Daijingu. Kompira-san was the one I remember very well. It was between Pālama and Kalihi. Try to get on the freeway from Houghtailing, you pass Kompira-san before you get on the freeway. It's on the right-hand side. Kompira-san—we used to go there and we get blessed. (Pause) Kompira-san had sumo matches.

WN: So this is Shinto?

GA: Yes.

WN: What about the foods? Did people come over to your house? Did you folks go over to other people's house?

GA: Yes. My mother always made food for people to come over and not very many people come over—just a few friends come over. We made calls to people to say “Happy New Year” to others so I went with my father. But one thing that my parents are very strict about—until noon my sisters could not go out. They were saying that it's not good for a girl to come—female person—to come to your house before noon. The first visitor should be a man. Male. My parents would not let my sisters go out until noontime. When we went out to say “Happy New Year” to families, friends, it was my father and me going out and my brother.

MK: Did you folks have the traditional *ozōni* [rice cake soup] in the morning?

GA: Oh yeah, *ozōni*. The Sunday before New Year's, my family always made *mochi*. Relatives, friends got together and we'd take a hundred-pound bag of rice and we'd make *mochi* and. . . what do you call big *mochi*?

MK: Oh, *kasane-mochi*.

GA: *Kasane-mochi* yeah. That's what we did. At the end we would have the *mochi* with the *an* which was really—we enjoyed. In fact we would cheat before they even finished, we'd take some *mochi*, put the *an* on top, and eat it ourselves.

WN: And you would do it at your house.

GA: Yeah, we did hundred pounds—the rice—every. . . . At the beginning as I remember, my father had—because he was a stonemason—we had a beautiful . . .

WN: Ohh, *usu, usu*.

GA: *Usu*. Uh-huh. Completely heavy stone and my father chipped and he made a very nice smooth. . . . We used to, on the first day go *koneru* [knead], so that if you don't do that it's going to fly all over. You got to go press and kind of mold the thing so that you get little sticky together. And then you'd pound after that.

We did that, but after (pause) I think beginning around 1965, close to [19]70—thereabouts—instead of pounding the *mochi* my father got the machine. You would feed it into the machine—push it in like a funnel, push it in. It'd go through and then roll out. We'd take that and put it back one more time so that we'd get it really done very nicely.

MK: But what happened to your father's *usu*?

GA: You know, in the process of moving from Washington—from home to Washington Place, something happened. It disappeared. So we don't have it. I tried to locate it but I could never find it. I wanted it because my father built that, it was for him. I thought that I could use that to not make *mochi* necessarily but to have a nice waterfall I could create. I thought about creating waterfall, having it recirculate and poured into a cup with a handle.

MK: The bamboo?

GA: When you get enough water, yeah. Enough water that it'd come down and the water would slip out. When the water is out, it would go back. That's what I wanted to do.

Now, I still have a big rock—piece of rock, flat—which my father used in a pond and he made a hole right in the center and water shooting out of the hole. He could make water shoot out. I still have that rock at home. I haven't done anything with it but it's a—for me—a memento of what my father did with that rock and the pond that he created.

WN: I know you went to Pālama Settlement. Did you also go to other institutions like YBA [Young Buddhist Association], for example?

GA: YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] later on.

WN: You went to YMCA.

GA: Yeah, when I was in high school we had a Hi-Y program. We had a Hi-Y club. When I graduated from McKinley [High School], when I went to university, before I went into the service, I was a Hi-Y leader for the group of people who was Hi-Y members. But I was very active with the Hi-Y in my high school years. Now, what I remember about Pālama Settlement also was, I went to the dental clinic over there.

WN: Oh, Strong-Carter.

GA: And we would be down there waiting to be called to go upstairs where the dentists were. Every once in a while we would have somebody yelling. And we would hope, "I hope we don't get that dentist!"

(Laughter)

WN: So you got dental work, you got medical work, you learned . . .

GA: Not medical.

WN: Oh, not medical.

GA: Where did I go for my medical work?

WN: Yeah that's right, Pālama didn't have medical.

MK: No, just dental.

WN: Yeah, who was your doctor?

GA: I don't remember going to any doctor in elementary school.

MK: You didn't get sick?

GA: No. I didn't get sick. Oh, and my mother had this Japanese medicine. They would come around selling the Japanese medicine.

MK: The envelope [filled with assorted medications]?

GA: Yeah, an envelope. I think we had the same medicines for everything.

(Laughter)

WN: Like aspirin.

GA: Yeah, yeah.

(Laughter)

WN: I'm wondering, you mentioned people would come to sell medicine. Were there other peddlers that came in your neighborhood to sell like *sakanaya-san*, and . . .

GA: Yeah, in a truck. The peddler would come. He would sell fish, some vegetables, and whatever else people wanted to buy.

I think the first doctor I remember that I went to was Dr. [Kiyoshi] Hosoi. Hosoi Mortuary over there. That was his—I think his brother—family ran that. But Dr. Hosoi was a doctor. He was in private practice and he's the only doctor I remember going to, until I grew up. I never saw very many doctors.

MK: That's something.

GA: I never got sick very much because so many years I went to school. No absence.

MK: Never absent.

WN: I know you went to Shinto—you know when New Year's time you went to the Shinto church and so forth. What religion were your parents?

GA: They were Buddhist. As a matter of fact I used to go to Sunday school on December 7, [1941]. I was at Sunday school. It was [Honpa] Hongwanji [Mission]. We were there

early. We all went there to play Ping-Pong. You get there early to play Ping-Pong, if not you got to wait until somebody else, your turn comes along.

So I always remember December 7 at Hongwanji, YBA hall playing Ping-Pong and lots of fire and boom, boom. We thought, “Gee, the military are very active practicing today.” We had Sunday school and about eleven o’clock I went home and it was not until I got home that I found out. My mother tell me, “Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japanese.” By the time I got home, my mother had prepared a bag for each one of us and she had food—various kinds of food in the bag. So in case we had to evacuate, we all had a bag.

Japanese school, I went with a strap around the back on my bag and with my books in a bag, I remember. My mother prepared something like that with food, water, and different kind of canned food and other foods in there. In case we had to relocate. We all had got gas masks issued to us. Every day when I went to school I had a gas mask hanging on my side.

WN: Backing up just a little bit, what Buddhist church were your parents members of? Did you go to Honpa?

GA: Honpa Hongwanji.

WN: Oh, okay.

GA: I think most people that I know were Honpa Hongwanji. (Pause) In fact, I didn’t know that there were other Hongwanjis.

WN: Was there one in Kalihi? Pālama? Was there one?

MK: I don’t think so.

WN: No more, okay.

GA: No, I don’t remember.

WN: How are we on time?

TC: We’re doing really well. We should break I’ve . . .

WN: Yeah, it’s getting long. This would be a good place to stop.

TC: We went longer than we sort of ballparked, but we’re reaching our noon deadline, so. . . .

WN: Can we stop here?

GA: Yeah.

WN: When we continue tomorrow, we’ll just pick up right from there.

GA: Okay, sure.

WN: I hope it's not too detailed for you, but. . . .

GA: No. I'm enjoying it because I never thought about [some things] for a long time.

WN: Oh, okay good!

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-2-2-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

May 8, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

WN: Okay. This is May 8, 2012, and we're interviewing former Governor George R. Ariyoshi. This is session number two, and the interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. And again we're starting session number two. Good morning Governor.

GA: Good morning.

WN: Why don't you start?

MK: Okay, as I said earlier, we're going to sort of keep you in your childhood time. We'll have you talk about your childhood, and also about your family. We still want to know more about your family.

GA: Okay.

MK: But first of all, maybe let's start off with your name. We know it's George Ryoichi Ariyoshi. Your name Ryoichi, how did you get that?

GA: My father's name was Ryozo. So I got the *ryo* from him and *ichi* because I was number one [first-born] son.

MK: And because you were number one son in a Japanese-American family, I want to know what responsibilities or privileges did you have as the number one son?

GA: I don't know if I had any privileges, but I knew I had a responsibility. From a time I was young I knew that I had to be the person to take care of my parents. I did that until both of them passed on.

MK: How did you come to that understanding? That you would be the one?

GA: Maybe Japanese[-language] school? I just know and I never even give it any thought now but I just knew and felt that I was going to have to take care of my parents.

WN: What about responsibilities to your siblings? Being the oldest.

GA: I think we all got along so well, and we had very little conflict. Especially because we were—what's curfew?—after the start of the war [World War II] from six o'clock we had to be off the street, until morning time. We spent all the time together so I guess we came very close to each other. We never had to think about anyone being responsible for somebody else.

MK: How about within the household? What kinds of chores did you and your siblings have?

GA: We all pitched in to help. My mother had, *udon-ya*, and we were too young to be able to help her, but once she had the shop on Smith Street, we were old enough to help take out the rubbish—the rubbish man would come take out the rubbish and I kind of did that. Beyond that there weren't too many other things for us to do.

MK: And I know that there was a older sister.

GA: Yes.

MK: Alice.

GA: Right.

MK: You mentioned that she had died. How long did she live?

GA: Alice lived until she was eighteen. (Pause) No, till she was twenty because I was eighteen when she passed away.

MK: So as the *oneesan* or older sister of the family what was her role?

GA: In a sense I guess she took care of everybody because my parents are busy. I think we were, my family, my brothers and my sisters, we were pretty well-behaved. Nobody had to really tell us very much. My mother never scolded. I don't remember a single time that my mother scolded me. But, she used to tell me about what was right, what was wrong, do this kind of thing not do this kind of thing—you know?

MK: You know with so many children in the family and your father at work and your mother with her shop, who did all the stuff in the house?

GA: We had only a two-bedroom house in the back of the shop there. At the same place we had only two bedrooms, two rooms are above the tofu shop when I was born. So it wasn't difficult to keep track, keep everything clean. We all learned that when we did something we had to put it away. We learned not to make any rubbish; we threw it away when it accumulated. So we didn't have to, really, do a lot of housework. We kept things clean as we went along.

MK: How about meal preparation?

GA: Oh, my sister—my older sister was very helpful—she helped with my mother. I remember every morning I had *misoshiru*.

(Laughter)

WN: *Misoshiru*, rice.

GA: Yeah, *misoshiru* and rice. Because we're having it every morning my mother prepared *misoshiru* different ways, sometimes it was with daikon, sometimes with *nasubi* sometimes with just clam, sometimes fish, *ebi*. So she prepared in different ways so we didn't feel like we were eating the same food every morning.

MK: In addition to the *misoshiru* and *gohan*. . . .

GA: *Tsukemono*. *Tsukemono* and *ume*. To this day I love *narazuke* and *misozuke*.

MK: Where did your mother get the *narazuke* and *misozuke*?

GA: There was a store down by River and Pauahi Street. Sumida Shoten. She got most of her Japanese foods from there.

I recall also those days we didn't have an electrical refrigerator. We had ice boxes. I remember having to go down to that service station very close to Sumida—between Maunakea and River Street—and to buy twenty-five pound ice. The only way I would carry them was to put it up and wrap it in newspaper. I remember that if you want to carry ice, bare ice becomes very difficult to carry. Cold and very slippery. But you put it—the newspaper—around it and it becomes very easy to carry. That's what I did.

MK: That was one of your regular responsibilities.

GA: Yeah, right.

WN: So they didn't let you take the hook?

(Laughter)

GA: I never knew the hook. . . .

(Laughter)

WN: We have some stories of people who used to deliver with the hook from the ice company. You had to go.

GA: Yes.

(Laughter)

GA: I remember my mother sometimes telling me to go down on Maunakea and King Street—the fish market there, many fish markets there. I remember one time she told to go buy *menpachi*. But she wanted to be sure that I bought fresh *menpachi* so I asked her, "How do I know what the fresh [fish looks like]—they're all red: looks the same."

She taught me, "Oh look at the eyes."

(Laughter)

GA: The eyes are shiny and not shriveled up, it's fresh. So, every time I would go look at *menpachi* I would look at the eyes.

(Laughter)

MK: You were taught well!

(Laughter)

WN: Do you still use that observation today when you buy fish?

GA: I don't go to the fish market anymore.

(Laughter)

MK: You mentioned your morning meal was *misoshiru*, rice, *tsukemono*. What kinds of foods did you folks eat in your family?

GA: All kinds of Japanese food. *Nitsuke* fish. *Nitsuke*. Not too much meat. What do you call it? Fish, vegetables—shoyu, sugar, vegetable.

MK: Oh okay. Shoyu and sugar, stir fry? Sort of cooked together?

GA: That, and then the—with water?

MK: Mm-hmm [yes]. *Satōjōyu*.

GA: Lots of things with *satōjōyu*.

MK: In your family were there ever any occasions where you felt things were tight? Money-wise?

GA: I think food-wise my family tried to provide. But I think we were also very mindful that we were not very wealthy. My parents had to struggle to make a living. So, I think I'm a very frugal person and I think I learned that—I don't buy things unnecessarily and when I buy things I want to be sure that I buy what I want and not what I don't need. So I think that part I learned from my parents and my father used to use the word *mudazukai o shinai yō ni*. . . .

MK: Do not spend. . . .

GA: Don't spend unnecessarily. I think it carried over when I became governor. Part of my thing that I did was—the frugal part—provide the services and my father said, “Don't buy things unnecessarily. Don't spend money unnecessarily. But if you need it, you buy, you spend for things that you need.” I think that's what I did when I was governor. I tried to be very frugal—not spend unnecessarily. But I acknowledge that some things were very important, necessary, and I wanted to provide adequate monies to run the programs.

MK: You know you mentioned that your parents—you're aware that your parents struggled to provide . . .

GA: Yes.

MK: I want to know with your dad being a stevedore, how consistent was it that he would have work?

GA: I think over a period of time it's fairly consistent. It all depends on when the ships come in, and sometimes ships come in one after the other and sometimes they don't come in for three, four, five days. There were times when he was extremely busy, and times that he was not working at all as a stevedore.

MK: So how did your parents deal with that kind of situation?

GA: I think they budgeted, yeah? They knew what the income was going to be, and they budgeted accordingly. Now, I think that my mother's *udon-ya* and the restaurant was very helpful in providing some money. It was a small—it was not a big thing and it was my mother making *okazu*, sushi, and things like that.

MK: Your mom's business was in operation during depression years, and it's in a area where people are primarily working-class people. How did her business fare?

GA: I think like most Japanese businesses, they managed to struggle, managed to stay alive, and I think they didn't try to get big.

MK: When you look back on . . .

GA: I think that's true of most business. I think Iida was a very big exception. I think Iida's store was very large. But, most other Japanese stores were small.

WN: Literally Ma and Pa.

GA: Yes. Right.

MK: Were there ever any employees at the tofu shop or *udon-ya* or the other restaurant?

GA: No.

MK: So really family-run then.

GA: Right, right.

MK: Another thing you mentioned yesterday that your father would send you down to the docks to see if the Sylvester Gang name was up for work, yeah? [Sylvester Carintho was the lead stevedore for the Sylvester gang.]

GA: Yeah.

MK: How come he sent you and how come he didn't go?

GA: Because that place was on (pause) Nimitz and—what's the street?—River Street. That's where they had the board up there. It was about three four blocks away from where we

stayed down on Smith Street. I guess it was just convenient for me to learn to do that. He didn't ask me to go, but I went because I knew when they were going to be posted and I went and I saw it and I came back and I told my father. So it was not his telling me to go, but it was more my going and trying to see whether or not there was work for my father.

MK: Was that on a daily basis or how did it work?

GA: Almost on a daily basis, because even if you worked on that day, he may have work on the next day also, another ship coming in. So, I had to be sure that I could report to him on a regular basis that he would not miss any work there.

WN: Oh I see. So sometimes you have to come back and say, "No work today."

GA: That's right. That's right.

MK: What was your father's reaction if you said, "*Otō-san*, no work today."

GA: Oh, he understood that's what it was. His job was like that and he didn't make a big thing of it.

MK: Another question I have just based on my own experience as being the daughter of an immigrant. My mom couldn't read, so if she had to see something written in English like, "Go to a state office," or something to fill out a form she would say, "Oh Michiko can you stay home and come with me today?" Did you ever have that kind of responsibility to read for your mom or dad?

GA: No, because I think during my time when I was growing up, I don't think that there was anything that was necessary for them to be able to learn or speak English or do something in English. My father, the illegal immigrant that he was, and when I found that out it was in 1951. I was a '52 Michigan Law grad, so it was my last summer here and that's when he told me about it. I was really surprised at what I found out and I was shocked, I said, "Papa! Weren't you afraid they were going to come and get you?" He said he had made up his mind that they were going to come and get—nothing happened.

At that time also the Walter-McCarran Act passed, and any person who lived in the United States from 1924 and could prove continuous residency thereafter could get a permanent resident. So when I became a lawyer in 1952, my first task was to get my father his long-term residence and when I was doing that, I found out how difficult it was to get that kind of information. Today it's very easy, your Social Security, everybody pay tax, you can go check your taxes, but back in those days when you paid taxes somebody wrote the receipt and gave you that receipt. Not very many people keep those kind of record receipts.

So (coughs), when I had to put it all together I had to rely on Sylvester Gang. A lot of the people who worked with him to get affidavits from them saying they were part of that working group with him in that Sylvester group and that the period that they worked together they identified. I could take those affidavits to indicate—use as proof of my father's residence in Hawai'i during that period. When I think about it now, I think about oh how easy it is today, you just have Social Security and when you got it then you can

- give them all back. But those days it was very difficult, and I think by the same token when you ask me about parents having to do something in English, I don't think there was ever a time when they had to do something in English or look at something in English.
- MK: You just mentioned that you had to get affidavits from members of the Sylvester Gang. What, if anything, had you heard about your dad and his early life as a stevedore?
- GA: When I first ran for office in 1954, when I made the announcement and I went around, my father went with me. Several people told me, "Oh, we didn't know his [GA's father's] name is Ariyoshi. We all call Yahata, Yahata." Yahatayama is a sumo name. People would tell me, "Oh, you know your father. He was a very understanding person." Many people went to him to ask for advice or to *sōdan*, you know? They told me that my father was very strong and that he was very highly respected amongst all the other stevedores and nobody tried to [abuse or take advantage of] him.
- MK: What did your father tell you about his experiences as a stevedore or on the waterfront?
- GA: We used to go every Christmas. The stevedoring companies would have Christmas parties with all the employees and we would go and get all kind of gifts. I used to look forward to going, and my father took us along. My father used to tell us that this work is very hard, and you have to work hard. He said, "I don't want you to have to work like this. You should get a good education. You can have better income, and you don't have to work as—do the kind of hard work that I do." So that was one of the things that he really stressed, "I work hard and my work requires hard work. I don't want you to have to go through this."
- MK: Before he was a stevedore, he was a stonemason, worked in quarries. What had you heard about that time of his life, as a quarryman?
- GA: My uncle worked with him. My uncle used to tell me, "Your father taught me how to crack rocks. You know he could crack rocks and make it crack and shape whatever he wanted to. He was very good at doing that."
- WN: Which uncle is this? Is this on your father's side or mother's side?
- GA: My mother's side.
- WN: Your mother's side? Oh. Did they work together or did he help him get the job or anything? Do you know anything like that?
- GA: I think sometimes they came together to work together but not daily work for the same employer or same person. In fact during those days, not very many people had an employer-employee structure you know? They needed work. To have work they all come together to work.
- MK: Your uncle—that would be your mother's . . .
- GA: My mother's brother.

MK: Brother. Tell us about your mother's family that was here in the islands.

GA: My grandma [Suma Yoshikawa], my mother's mother, always wanted to get us something to eat so I remember it very clearly. We loved going over to the house to see Grandma, because she was always trying to put something together. Whether it was, *dango* or *manjū*. You know she was quick at making. My mother was very fast, too. She could make all kind of *manjū* and *dango*. You know, really fast. That's what I remember very clearly about my grandma.

Now my grandpa [Masajiro Yoshikawa] was very quiet, and he didn't say very much. But I knew that he was, he was very strong also. Healthy. Until he died when was ninety-eight years old and even before—just at ending his nineties—he was out in the yard using the pick making *yasai*. Growing vegetables.

MK: What were your grandparents' names?

GA: Yoshikawa.

MK: Yoshikawa?

GA: Yoshikawa.

MK: And where did they live?

GA: For a while on Kalihi, they lived right next to us for many years. But the place that I remember after we went to country and came back, they lived on Holt Lane, which was on Fort Street and School Street, before, between *makai* side of Fort—School Street. It was a lane, short lane. Holt Lane. That's where my grandma and grandpa lived.

WN: Is that Hope, Auld Lane? A-U-L-D?

GA: H-O-L-T.

WN: Oh, H-O-L-T.

MK: Holt Lane.

GA: The next time I remember where they were living was right next to us on Kalihi Street. My folks and my father bought two properties, and we lived in one property and the other property my grandpa and grandma came to live in.

MK: In terms of relatives when you were a small boy, you had your mother's mom and dad, grandma and grandpa. You had an uncle. Were there others?

GA: Well, I had my uncle—I had one, two, three, four uncles. Four brothers in that Yoshikawa family. Back in those days travel was far you know, hard—we don't get around too much. So, we didn't see my uncle or my grandma that often.

MK: In fact when you were a child what kind of transportation did your family have?

GA: Oh, you know foot mobile?

(Laughter)

GA: We walked a lot.

MK: What about your father? Did he have a car, or any kind of vehicle?

GA: Yeah, I remember the car when we went to the country, Lā'ie. He had a car that we drove out to Lā'ie. (Pause) Other than that car going to Lā'ie, I don't—Pālama we did not have a car. Hikina Lane we did not have a car. All the other times, no cars. The restaurant on Smith Street, we didn't have a car then. (Pause) We had good foot mobile! (MK laughs.)

WN: And I'm assuming you were barefooted most of the time.

GA: That's right. That's right. [During World War II,] we had to evacuate from Smith Street because it was very close to the waterfront, and we went to Mānoa—my [Matsukawa] cousins had a banana farm out there. We stayed out there for about one year. It's a long walk to the bus stop, about mile-and-a-half walk. So every day walking to the bus stop to catch the bus to go to school—McKinley. We had to walk from home to the bus stop. Very often we got picked up, people passing by they would stop and pick us up. But sometimes no cars came down. We had to walk.

(Laughter)

MK: Whereabouts in Mānoa was that banana farm?

GA: (Pause) You know where Paradise Park is? It was on. . . . a lane on the right side of Paradise Park, up Mānoa Road. You go in way down to the end. It's paved up to that place, and from there it's called Waaloa Road. It was not paved. It was . . . grass in the center—you know, cobblestones on the side and the cars drove right on through there. That was about a half mile from there to our home.

WN: Wow, that's a real country area.

GA: Oh, real country. From there to home—nobody—very few people. I remember only one, two families living along the way. Two Japanese families living along the way. Most of the time we walked the last half mile.

MK: Again, foot mobile yeah?

(Laughter)

MK: I realized when I was reading about people from Kumamoto, they said Kumamoto people, they tended to go into quarry work or road work. So I was wondering among your parents' friends or work associates, was that the case?

GA: My oldest uncle, Slim, he was stonemason also. Another uncle was a mechanic. Automobile mechanic worked for Coca Cola for many years. The other uncle he went

into MIS [Military Intelligence Service] right after the war started and he volunteered, he went into MIS. I'm trying to figure out what the other uncle was doing. (Laughs)

MK: How about your grandpa?

GA: My grandpa, he worked in a plantation on the Big Island. I'm not sure when they came to Honolulu, but when he was in Honolulu. . . . I don't remember him working except in the *hatake* raising vegetables. My grandpa was a very—he liked to dress up on Sunday. He would wear a suit and tie and he would wear a hat, you know? In fact, my sister told me one day. She was walking down the street and this man was coming and one of her friends said, "Oh look at this man! He must be very rich man!"

So my sister, "Oh, that's my grandpa!"

(Laughter)

GA: He just liked to—you know on Sunday—dress up, put on a suit and wear a tie and put a hat on and go to the YBA, Hongwanji.

MK: Very interesting. (GA laughs.)

MK: Changing the subject a little bit. How did you get the name George?

GA: Because of George Washington! (Chuckles) (Coughs)

WN: Who gave you that name?

GA: My father.

WN: Oh, okay. So from the time you can remember you were always George.

GA: Yes. His generation they didn't know very many English names but they knew George Washington.

MK: So from birth you were George Ryoichi Ariyoshi.

GA: Yes.

WN: What about Jim, your brother? Do you know who he's named after?

GA: No.

(Laughter)

MK: Another question I have is, I noticed we didn't speak too much about the time you were in Wai'alae. That was just a short period and you were really young.

GA: Uh-huh. Kindergarten I went to Wai'alae School.

MK: What do you remember?

GA: I remember the long walk. We had to walk ‘Ō‘ili Street all the way and in there were lots of piggeries. I remember several incidents. One time, when my mother gave me some money to buy ice cream—that was on Wai‘alae Avenue, there was a store there, Wai‘alae Nui—and by the time I got the ice cream home it all melted.

(Laughter)

GA: It’s a long walk. I remember another instance. We had a *furo* that my mother used to—we used to put firewood and—old time *furo*, yeah?—burn the fire. My mother kept an axe—hatchet—over there. One of our neighbors—we had to walk through kind of a wooded area, slight wooded area, to reach the house, Torigoe family. I got along very nicely with one of the Torigoe boys, but the older one was a really nasty boy. He was making trouble for everybody. One day when I was passing by, he was on a treetop on one of those trees and he urinated on me and I saw him. I was so angry. I ran back, and I got the hatchet, and I was going to chop down the tree!

(Laughter)

GA: I started and my mother came and she stopped me. But he was screaming and yelling, you know? He was so concerned I was going to actually chop the tree down.

(Laughter)

GA: Another time I was playing at one of my neighbors’ piggery. They had lots of old crates and boxes—wooden crates. We were playing and we were jumping down and I remember jumping on a piece of crate with a nail sticking up like this. I jumped right on the nail and the nail came right through my feet. I tried to get it out but I couldn’t pull it out. So with a board—crate board—about this big, about two feet, real long, with a nail sticking up in and through my feet, I had to go home like that. And going home it was not smooth road, all cobblestones like this you know. So I had to through there and get home and my mother took me to the doctor. The doctor took it out but I never cried, and doc mentioned to my mother, “Oh gee.” I can really take the pain. So that happened. In fact, I still have the scar now on my toe. Fairly big scar.

MK: Oh my goodness.

WN: You mean on both sides? Bottom and top?

GA: On the top. I never looked to see if I had anything on the bottom but.

(Laughter)

WN: So you were actually walking, “Clop clop clop clop clop,” with those stuck on you?

GA: Right. That’s kind of walking through like this.

WN: How long was that? How long a walk?

GA: That was maybe about a city block.

WN: Wow! (Laughs) Jeez.

MK: What were living conditions like in Wai‘alae for your family?

GA: I enjoyed it because we had a lot of space and we could go into the wooded areas you could play you know? We had neighbors—I only remember the Torigoe family but there was another family there. We all played together. I think that one year there Wai‘alae was a very pleasant time of my life. That’s when we used to talk about—oh, when it rains we can stop the rain by finding two dry rocks and spitting on one and putting it—put it away.

WN: Wait, wait, say that again. Dry rocks?

GA: When it’s raining yeah? We talked about finding two dry rocks that were not wet. So they were in some place where it was sheltered. We’d take it, and we’d spit on one rock and put the other one on top there. We’d put it away in a dry place and we say this is going to stop the rain. (Laughs)

WN: Wow. (Laughs)

MK: Who told you about that?

GA: Nobody. Really, we just stopped—somebody said that—thought we all did the same kind of thing. That’s when we did things like finding (pause) *koa* beans. Making those guns, making a rifle with a tire tube. They had the plant there that had kind of a big beans. You peeled it and very sticky. You rub it on the bottom of a can, and we’d stand on the can, it stuck to our feet and we kind of walk with this—very carefully. I learned to use it as high stilts.

WN: You know last time yesterday you talked about *peewee*. Can you explain to us how—the basic rules of *peewee*?

GA: *Peewee* is—there are three wood handles, brush handles.

WN: Okay. Broom?

GA: Broom handles, yeah . . .

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

GA: There three parts to that broom handle.

WN: So you had three broom handles?

GA: One was about oh, a foot long. We used that as a hand—to hit you know? The other two were maybe two inches long. One was cut on both sides and the other one was a two-inch long, but kind of [slanted] one end.

WN: Like a biased cut?

GA: Angled, yeah. Like this. That one, what we did was we would hit the angled part and it would fly up in the air. There was this big thing you would hit it. So we'd tap (taps the table). When we hit it, we'd try to hit it as far as we can. If somebody caught it we were out, but if they didn't catch it and they went by, then we'd [word unclear] big handle, and we'd count one, two, three, four, and how many. That's how we kept track of who had the most points.

WN: Oh, I see.

GA: We would make an indentation in the ground. We put the piece—two-inch piece—over like this. With another piece of small stick, whatever we could find, we'd put in there and we would try to hit it out as far as we could.

WN: Hit it upwards?

GA: Yeah. People would be out there if they caught it then that person comes and I'm out.

WN: If they don't catch it, you just measure. Measure the length by the length of broom sticks.

GA: Yes.

WN: I see. That's how many points you have? And then you keep on going until someone catches it.

GA: That's right. Now, you see when I think about it now, that part where you hit like this is not bad. But when you throw it, you hit it up in the air. Hit this up in the air like this . . .

WN: Hit it downward, yeah?

GA: Bang it. That could have been very dangerous, when I think back. Because you're hitting it hard—most of us tried to hit it as hard as they possibly can. So somebody could try to catch it to touch it—they couldn't catch it. So when I think about that *peewee*—that part of it—I thought it was very dangerous.

Now, we played *alavia*. . . the Durham bag? Put, grass—most times it's grass. Once in a while we'd cheat and put little small piece of rock in there so that it had the weight and you could throw it straight faster harder. Make it more sore when you hit.

WN: Was it like chase master? I mean, somebody is "it"? Somebody is "it" with the *alavia*?

GA: We would say somebody would be "it." We would make a round round circle and somebody would poke—that person has to turn around and look at their face and try to figure it out who it was that poked him. If he made the right selection, then that person who got selected now becomes "it." But if you're wrong, then, he has to go run. We tell him he has to go certain distance and we get this *alavia* and try to hit him also.

(Laughter)

WN: And you guys put rocks in them?

GA: Yeah. (WN laughs.)

GA: Not big rocks, but small little rocks to give it some weight, and we'd try pushing it with the grass we don't really hurt the person. But it's all still sore.

(Laughter)

MK: Kids could have fun nowadays if they'd played these games. (GA chuckles.)

GA: But it was during that kindergarten at Wai'alae that I learned a lot of these things.

MK: By the way, how was the school at Wai'alae?

GA: I enjoyed my kindergarten. I looked forward to going to kindergarten school, and the teachers were very, very nice. That's why I feel that in order to have a good education or system, I think it's important for teachers to be likeable. I think when that condition exists, there's the greatest effort on part of the student to try to do well if they want to please the teacher. Not for himself or herself only but because—you want to do it because the teacher is good and you want to please the teacher. At Wai'alae that's when I found the teachers are very very good.

I'm very grateful, because when I made the decision to become a lawyer it was in intermediate school. I had a teacher Mrs. Hamada, Margaret Hamada. She was my teacher for three years, two periods every day. When I told her that I wanted to become a lawyer, she made an arrangement for me to meet with a lawyer. She had the arrangement with Arthur Trask, Yasutaka Fukushima. She arranged for me, and I went to—the appointments—and I came back. I tell Mrs. Hamada, "Oh you know Mrs. Hamada, but how can I become a lawyer if I can't speak?" I had difficulty producing certain sounds—my *th*'s my *s*—and I tried to concentrate on sound production. As a result I started to stutter and oftentimes I would forget what I want to say because I was so cognizant on saying it the right way. I told Mrs. Hamada, "How can I become a lawyer if I can't speak well?"

She told me, "Oh, let's work on that." She had come down weekends, she tells me, "Oh come down to school,"—Central Intermediate School—and she said, "I need some help so come and help me." So I would go and help her. But help only for a few minutes and she really didn't need my help, but she wanted me to come and she would make me read. She would make me read aloud, and oh I spent hours and hours doing that. She had me appointed as defense counsel for student court. Then she encouraged me to enter an oratory contest.

When I left Central I went to McKinley [High School]. Whenever I entered oratory contests she would come. She follow me, she would come and listen to me. I remember her telling me that one contest when I represented McKinley at the territorial finals, when she told me, "I can't believe I'm listening to the same George Ariyoshi," and it's all because of her. She came to all my inaugurations. She came and she met a lot of our campaign people. When she died I was asked to speak at her funeral. I remembered people asking me to do that—asking me to come and speak at the funeral, because Mrs.

Hamada always said, "All the teacher wants is one person. And the person that I had was George Ariyoshi." She felt she was very satisfied with being a teacher.

MK: Very special teacher.

GA: You know by chance I was so lucky I had her for two periods every day for three years. My entire Central Intermediate School years.

WN: I'm wondering, did she see a special kind of promise in you? Did she help other students with their situations?

GA: She was very kind. She was very helpful. She was a very special teacher. She cared very much, you know? (Coughs)

WN: What did she teach?

GA: Core studies.

WN: Core studies?

GA: Core studies.

MK: You know you mentioned that when she found out that you wanted to be a lawyer, I want to know how come you wanted to be a lawyer?

GA: You know I used to write for the school paper too. So, I wanted to be a journalist. In the study of vocation, my impression of being a lawyer was, oh, a lawyer can help many people. That's what I remember very clearly, that a lawyer can help many people. They help people when they're in trouble or when they're in need. So that's when I decided, "Gee, I think I want to be a lawyer." So the choice between being a journalist or a lawyer. I decided that I wanted to become a lawyer after I visited Arthur Trask and Yasutaka Fukushima.

WN: So this is as early as intermediate school that you wanted to be a lawyer.

GA: Mm-hmm. So in the eighth grade that's when I decided I want to become a lawyer.

MK: I'd like to know what occurred when you went to see Mr. Trask.

GA: They both told me about what the lawyer does. Most of the time people come to see a lawyer when they need help, when there's a need for something—to do something for them. Maybe a person being tried for some kind of criminal activity. Arthur Trask was a very great criminal lawyer. So he told me about how he had people in trouble who came to him, and he tried to help them. Very much like the student court that Central was doing, the defense counsel. That's what Mrs. Hamada got me appointed as defense counsel, for the student court.

Yasutaka Fukushima indicated to me he was more a civil lawyer. He was telling me about how people come to him for advice so that they don't make mistakes, that they do the right thing. That kind of impressed me that the lawyer can help keep people out of

trouble. Do things in the right way so that you stay within the law. So between the two of them I decided, “Oh, I think I want to become a lawyer.”

MK: People like Yasutaka Fukushima. Japanese. Mr. . . .

GA: Arthur Trask.

MK: Arthur Trask. Part Hawaiian.

GA: Uh-huh.

MK: Did their ethnic backgrounds ever kind of pop into your head as you were meeting them? That these guys are lawyers?

GA: I think I must have felt, yeah? When I met Yasutaka because there weren't that many Japanese lawyers—[Masaji] Marumoto, Yasutaka, [Wilfred] Tsukiyama, and [Robert] Murakami. Those were the only four lawyers that were Japanese at the time. I think I felt that if they could make it there was an opportunity for me also.

WN: You know you mentioned earlier that you always wanted to help people? Why and why did you have this feeling and when did this feeling come about?

GA: I think I had that feeling all my life. You know my grandson for example, he's nine years old. I recall his always trying to help somebody who needed help. I remember when he was in St. Clements Pre-School, they had Grandparents Day. Jean and I went and there was this youngster who was—class of Ryo-*kun*'s—Ryoichi, his name is Ryoichi—Ryoichi's class. He was seated by himself, and no grandparents. So he was kind of sad sitting down, so Ryoichi went up to him and sat next to him and kept him company so he wouldn't be lonesome. I think I was like that when I was young. (Pause) Ryoichi, my grandson, always trying to help when someone needs help, when they need something, he's always coming around. . . .

WN: So you remember yourself. You being like that too?

GA: Yes.

WN: Do you remember any specific instances where you had the same situation that Ryoichi had?

GA: When I was at Ka'iulani School, I was a good speller. I was very good at math. When my classmates had difficulties I was always trying to help teach them how to do the math or how to spell correctly. So, I was like that when I was in elementary school.

Now, I wanted to become a lawyer when I went into the service and the occupation force of Japan. I was there for a very short while, and they asked me if I would reenlist so I could continue to work out there. I refused to reenlist because I had this burning desire—I wanted to get home quickly and back to school and become a lawyer quickly so that I can start practicing law.

TC: I need to interrupt to change tape.

MK: Do you need a break, Governor? Are you okay?

GA: No, I'm okay.

MK: This is interesting.

WN: You have terrific stamina.

MK: Yeah!

(Laughter)

WN: You know, we were going to ask you . . .

GA: You know back to these things you're asking me. I kind of forgot about—you know?

WN: Well, good.

MK: Good, good good good.

GA: You're bringing all these memories back. I never thought about what I was doing as a kid at Wai'alae. Or 'Ō'ili Road up there. I never remembered too clearly my efforts to chop that tree down with the Torigoe boy.

(Laughter)

WN: Actually those are really interesting stories.

GA: My mother she was so concerned.

WN: The best story I think was with the nail, because I couldn't help but think a former—I mean a future—governor walk-clopping down with a nail in his foot.

(Laughter)

WN: I think that was funny.

GA: I have a big scar on my feet.

WN: Oh my goodness.

TC: Did you reset the timecode?

WN: I think he's going to show us [his scar].

GA: Excuse me, my foot. But, you see?

WN: Can we get this on tape? He's showing us his scar. (Laughs)

MK: Oh my goodness!

WN: That must have bled a lot huh?

GA: Yeah.

WN: A lot of blood huh?

GA: I don't recall it was so long. . . . (Laughs)

WN: I'm sure yeah, man, that's. . . .

MK: That's pretty horrendous, you know?

GA: But I remember the doctor telling my mother that he was amazed that I was not crying.

WN: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah.

GA: That's what my mother said. From the time I was a child she said I was *gaman tsuyoi*.

MK: *Gaman tsuyoi*. You could really bear it, yeah? Oh my goodness. We should have gotten that on tape.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

TC: You know what? Could we back up to explain what *gaman* means or *gaman* . . .

MK: *Tsuyoi*. *Gaman tsuyoi*.

TC: Yeah, what does that mean?

MK: To be able to bear . . .

(Taping interrupted, the resumes.)

MK: Oh, we will ask, we will ask the governor.

GA: Yeah, I can stand it. I can bear it.

MK: Okay, we'll back up a little bit yeah? Governor—you know—you were telling us about the time that you injured your—you stepped on the nail and you had to deal with this nail sticking out of your foot. And that, what happened after that when you were at the doctor's?

GA: The doctor told my mother that he was amazed that I was not crying and complaining about the pain. So my mother later on always told me that I was *gaman tsuyoi*. That I could take things and bear things—whatever happens.

WN: So like a high pain tolerance.

GA: Yeah, but I think it's more than the pain she was telling me. She was telling me that, no matter what happens to me I could bear it and I would not complain too much about what

happened. I think it was very—that the feeling was very important also because when I became governor, that people who said things and do things I didn't feel that offended. I didn't feel as though, oh, I got to do something about that kind of criticism or whatever it might be.

MK: That is unusual for a little kid to be able to bear that kind of pain. Warren, you have a question.

WN: Well, backing up to the time your father—you said that your father had jumped ship and you seem to imply that it was not just your father who jumped ship. Were there others?

GA: Yeah. I don't know who the others were except that I think my father's cousin. . . . who had the farm up Mānoa, also jumped ship. The reason why I say that—they never talked about it but they talked about the same kind of experience. Experiences in Japan and being together and so many things that they did. I never thought about that this much but when I think about it now, I feel that that Mr. Matsukawa—he was full. . . . my father's cousin who had a banana farm up, Mānoa probably jumped ship with him because they were so close together and many things that they did.

MK: So your father, too, had relatives in Hawai'i.

GA: Only that one.

MK: And that cousin, Matsukawa, his banana farm was close to your—the other banana farm you were at during the war?

GA: That same banana farm.

MK: Oh, same banana farm? I see.

GA: When we evacuated, we evacuated to the banana farm which was run by Matsukawa, my father's cousin. It was the last house up on that road. You couldn't go any further. It was forest after that.

WN: Besides spending that one year in Mānoa during the war at the farm, did you have any other kind of relationship or contact with Mr. Matsukawa?

GA: I remember even before the war during the summer we used to go up, stay a week or so at the farm. In fact, the week or so we spent at the farm during the summer I remember one instance where I was—we were *'ohana*. I told my cousin, "Eh, I think I feel something over here."

So without looking he told me, "I think it's a centipede." (Laughs) So I got frightened. So he told me, "Take your pants off but take it off very slowly, and we're going hold this part so we don't rub the centipede." I took my pants off and sure enough in my pants there was a huge centipede.

(Laughter)

MK: That's a real memorable experience!

(Laughter)

GA: I remember going to the mountain to cut some trees for firewood and we would cut the trees big enough so that they could carry them out. After they brought them home, I had to get a saw and then saw them into right sizes. I think I developed very strong stomach muscles because of that.

MK: So was it a regular summer thing that you would go and be with this cousin?

GA: Yes. On top of that, I think for a year and a half, we had to evacuate and we lived up there, up on the farm.

WN: Can I ask you about Mrs. Hamada who really helped you out when you had your lisp? I was just wondering how difficult it was being a kid with that lisp. Were you teased at all or anything like that? Was it something that you really felt needed to be fixed?

GA: Yeah. Because especially when I decided I wanted to become a lawyer I became more conscious of the need for me to do something about my speech. I felt that I had to learn to produce all the sounds. I had difficulty with my *ses* and *th*'s. It was not because they were teasing me or anything like that, because many people had very similar kind of speech problems. But it just that, my feeling that if I'm going to become a lawyer I got to do something about my speech pattern.

WN: Did it affect you at school at all before Central?

GA: No. In fact I didn't feel I had a problem until I went to Central Intermediate School. I know I lisp a little bit but I didn't feel it was really a problem then.

MK: What occasions or times did you feel that, "Oh, this will be a problem if I want to be a lawyer."?

GA: I recall one day in class we were having the discussion, I put up my hand and I wanted to participate. I stood up and I became so conscious of how I was going to produce the sounds that I forgot what I wanted to say. That actually happened to me in class one time. I think that and my feeling that having talked to Fukushima and Trask and they both spoke very well—my feeling was that I couldn't make it if I didn't speak like them.

MK: I was also wondering—you know as a young—you're still intermediate school. What was like your model of someone who spoke well in Hawai'i?

GA: Well, when I went to see, Fukushima and Arthur Trask they both spoke very well and I knew I had to speak like that as a lawyer. I also at some later years—the Torigoe family, one of the girls [Thelma Torigoe] was a little older than me she got married to Shigeo Yoshida. And Shigeo Yoshida was a person who, more than any other Japanese, was very eloquent. He spoke very well. Shigeo Yoshida—very eloquent person—became a leader in the Japanese community after the war broke out. The Emergency Services Committee, he was a very important part of that. Because he spoke well to—you know if you close your eyes you couldn't think that at that time a Japanese person was speaking. So I had contact with Shigeo Yoshida, before the war and after the war started.

WN: Back then, speaking—being Japanese or non-*haole* speaking like that, what did that mean? Did that mean more education or—you know in those days what was the thought?

GA: Being very eloquent, being able to say what you want to in a way you feel would not be embarrassing to you. Being able to speak well enough so that you could convince other people that you knew what you were saying, and you knew exactly how to say it. Shigeo Yoshida—by the way—was married to the Torigoe family girl and it was her brother that peed on me from that treetop.

(Laughter)

WN: I was just going to ask that!

TC: I never pieced that together. Thelma would be mortified.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

GA: But his brother—Susumu [Torigoe]—was a very good friend. He was one class above me at McKinley. We played together. But that older brother was *ijiwaru*.

(Laughter)

MK: Could you explain *ijiwaru*?

GA: Kind of spoiled, nasty.

(Laughter)

WN: Can you talk about your contacts with Shigeo Yoshida? How did you first meet him or see him?

GA: I first met him because he was a teacher at Central Intermediate School. Every other teacher also had a very high regard for the way he talked, “Oh he speaks so well. He’s so eloquent.” Then after the war, he became very much involved with the Japanese community. The Emergency Service Committee was a group that was put together to try to look at the problems that the Japanese Americans would face in Hawai‘i, during that time—what they can do to make things better. But the greater concern was about after this was all over—what will happen, what can we do to make things better for the Japanese Americans. Shigeo Yoshida and Mitsuyuki Kido was a teacher at Farrington High School. Most of the people that I remember very clearly were very much involved in this effort, “What can we do to make the plight of the Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i better now? What can we do to make it so that things will be better when things are all over?”

WN: Were you aware in the early days of where Shigeo Yoshida was from or anything about his family background?

GA: His brother [Ernest Yoshida] was a very good friend of our family, my father. My father helped him with wrestling—taught him how to wrestle. You know sumo? Shigeo Yoshida’s brother.

WN: Brother. Older brother?

GA: Older brother. Yeah. So he used to come over to the house quite often, and he was very helpful.

WN: And what was Shigeo Yoshida's older brother like? Was he like Shigeo Yoshida?

GA: No, very different.

WN: In what way?

GA: Well, he was not as eloquent. He was just like any other *nikkeijin* at that time. (Pause) Strong gutsy person.

MK: You know early in the interview you mentioned that people said your dad was a man that they could consult—you know *sōdan suru hito* yeah? For your family who was their *sōdan* person—the go-to person to get advice on matters?

GA: Earlier we talked about peddlers—people coming around selling, one of those peddlers that used to come around to the house. His father, [Totaro] Motosue, he used to have a piggery. It was a very respected, very close friend to my father. And I know that my father needed anything he would also always go to Mr. [Totaro] Motosue and sit down with him and talk to him.

MK: In your youth who did you look up to as like a role model?

GA: (Pause) At what age?

MK: When you're like in elementary school?

GA: Well, my father for one. I had great respect for my father. (Pause) I cannot think of anybody else from my elementary school years.

MK: Then when you got into Central Intermediate?

GA: That was before the war. My youngest uncle, Tom, Thomas [Yoshikawa]—he was at McKinley High School. He would stop by to see us from time to time. I kind of looked up to him as an older brother kind of always coming around to spend time with us.

MK: In those days, I was wondering, were you like other American kids who had like sports heroes or movie heroes or anything like that?

GA: Yeah. I loved to play baseball. Every chance I had I was out playing baseball in the Children's Park. I was very mindful of Joe Gordon and Phil Rizzuto—shortstop and second base of the Yankees. Joe DiMaggio later on.

MK: I was also curious—you're known for your height, your stature as a Japanese-American. Were you always tall? Even as a kid?

GA: No. I saw a picture with my seventh grade class. The Japanese always wear black coat and we're all the same size and it was after in my ninth grade year I think where I really shot up. When the war broke out I was already five [feet] eleven [inches]. So as a sophomore I was five feet eleven [inches]. I don't know what height I was when I was seventh grade but I was just like every other child. Same height.

MK: You mentioned that you were interested in baseball. Did you pursue that interest?

GA: No, because when the war started, we had to be home and my mother was very careful about keeping track of where I was. I had to be home immediately after school. So, I couldn't take part in very much sports, but until then every chance I had I wanted to play baseball. In fact, when I started to play baseball it was on the corner of Smith and Beretania Street—that used to be a park, Children's Park. That's when we used to go down there and play baseball.

During the times I was playing baseball, we used to play with outdoor ball. It's like a skin ball. (Skin ball is like regular baseball.) My father bought me a pair of gloves, but all the kids that would play—some of them could not even afford to buy a pair of gloves. So when we got together to play, if I were out in the field at that time using my glove, when I came in to bat I would leave my glove over there so somebody else would use it—we did that.

When we started play ball, everyone was afraid of catching because we didn't have equipment, no mask nothing. So I used to catch without any mask. I learned to catch blocking my face so I don't tear up my face. I got hit in other parts of my body. I learned to catch, so later on I was able to play softball—twelve-inch softball—and I caught. When I went to Michigan State, I played for the Hawai'i team—I was the captain for the team. I played catcher. When I went to Michigan I was catching for the Hawai'i Club team and all of a sudden the umpire stopped the game. He said, "Wait wait wait! Where's your mask?"

I tell him, "Oh, I don't use a mask."

He said, "You can't catch without a mask!"

I said, "What do you mean I can't catch without the—I've been doing it all my life!"

So he tell me, "Well, I can't let you continue because I don't want you to get hurt. So you got to put a mask on." So I had to borrow a mask and put it on. I had a hard time with it because when they made a pop fly, I don't know where the ball is. I was supposed to take it off. But I didn't know how to take it off and look around.

(Laughter)

GA: But that's how I learned to catch without the mask on.

WN: You know you mentioned Children's Park? Why was it called Children's Park? Do you know? Was that the formal name of it?

GA: Yeah, it was called Children's Park. Because I guess a lot of children were there. There were no parks in the neighborhood. Yeah, 'A'ala Park was straight down. Other than that, there were no parks down there.

That's where I met George Akita, at Children's Park. I was on the swing and he came by and he wanted to know where I lived. I told him where I lived. Then by coincidence when I went to Central, he and I ended up in the same school classroom. Same core studies. Same homeroom.

WN: Where was his home?

GA: His home was up by Vineyard Street. (Pause) I don't know exactly where on Vineyard Street, but I knew it was from Vineyard Street. George Akita was a champion orator. When he was in the eighth grade at Central Intermediate School he became O'ahu Intermediate School champion orator. He competed inter-island. Our teachers used to tell us all, he's going to become a politician. They thought I was going to become a college professor. But the roles got reversed.

(Laughter)

GA: George Akita, we were both George Akita—GA. Our friends all knew us as GA-GA you know? So when we were in the service at Fort Snelling he was in one company and I was another company. They all talked about, "GA snores and GA snores over here, too." The two GAs snore and keep everybody awake.

(Laughter)

WN: So who had the idea that you would, or the thought that you might, be a college professor?

GA: My, homeroom teacher Mrs. Miyamoto.

WN: This is at Central?

GA: At Central, yeah. I don't know why she thought I was going to become a college professor, but that's what she, "College professor you're going to be—and you're going to become politician." Now her (clears throat), Mrs. Miyamoto's husband, Stan Miyamoto, became very active later on in the Japanese community. The Emergency Services Group, he was also a member and was very much involved in discussions about the future of the AJAs [Americans of Japanese Ancestry] in Hawai'i. That group also was to some extent responsible for, the 442[nd Regimental Combat Team], the volunteers. That they were able to get the United States to accept volunteers, the AJAs as volunteers.

MK: Before we get into that time period I was also wondering about Robello School. You know that's a school people don't hear about. You hear about Ka'iulani but not Robello School. What do you remember about your time at Robello School?

GA: I went to Robello School only for my second grade, only one year I was there. (Clears throat) I know we had to read aloud a lot. Everybody in the classroom taking turns say,

“Okay now you read this paragraph you read this paragraph,” and we did a lot of reading. So that’s about all I remember. I don’t remember too much about Robello School.

MK: What do you remember most about going to Ka‘iulani School? That’s third, fourth, fifth, sixth grade yeah?

GA: You know I was very good at spelling and I was very good at math. I had an easier time at Ka‘iulani School because that’s what they concentrate a lot on—spelling and math. So, both of those I was able to really do very well. I remember my third grade teacher—she was a wild one.

MK: (Laughs) Why do you say that?

GA: Because she had a ruler in her hand all the time and she was not afraid to use it. If she didn’t like something she’d go, whack! (WN chuckles.)

MK: She was very different from your, kindergarten teacher!

GA: Yes. In fact we were all scared of her. I remember her name too—Mrs. Ayau. There were two Ayaus at that time. I remember her she was A. Ayau.

(Laughter)

GA: Mrs. A. Ayau. Really wild. She would come from back and hit people when she didn’t like what they were doing. Sometimes she’d bring her fingers together and then she would hit like this—with a ruler. I never got hit.

TC: Governor we’re down to, about ten minutes out. Kay says that—we have to get you out the door at eleven-thirty. I can’t resist backtracking to Shigeo Yoshida, because I’m still researching him and writing about him. I just wonder like you said that you had contact with him before the war—his brother used to come over to your house. Which brother was that? Was that the oldest brother?

GA: Yeah, older brother.

TC: Do you remember his name?

GA: I don’t know his first name. But we used to call him Mustache because he had a mustache.

TC: Mustache. Right. He was the one who went into the 442 and became a professional soldier right?

GA: That’s right. Yes.

TC: When you knew him personally, like he’d be in your house—Mustache.

GA: Mustache.

TC: Yeah. But you knew Shigeo at that point?

GA: Yes.

TC: But he wasn't already a teacher right? He was like just, growing up right?

GA: No. Shigeo Yoshida is probably ten years older than me.

TC: More than that actually, he was born in—he's quite a . . . he's nineteen years older than you are.

GA: Oh really?

TC: Yeah. He was born in 1907. So, eighteen, nineteen years older. But, do you remember where they lived?

GA: I know where she lived, Mrs. Yoshida. They lived in . . .

TC: Oh you remember where the . . .

GA: Torigoes, yes.

TC: But . . .

GA: I don't know where Shigeo or Mustache used to live. But Mustache was a more frequent visitor to the house because he was involved in sumo. My father helped train him in sumo.

TC: They were from the Big Island. They were from south Hilo.

GA: Oh really. I didn't know that.

TC: One of the things you're telling me is interesting 'cause I'm not sure when they moved to O'ahu. But, that you locating them on O'ahu earlier than I had in my mind. When was about the first time you think you actually encountered Shigeo face-to-face?

GA: You know when he was teaching at Central Intermediate School. . . . For a short period of time, he had the newswriting class, and I used to write for the paper, a student journalist. That's when I first made contact with Shigeo.

TC: Did he impress you as a good writer?

GA: No, because I never saw his writing.

TC: You didn't see his writing.

GA: But he impressed me as a terrific, very eloquent person.

TC: What did he teach?

GA: Newswriting.

TC: I mean but what was his . . .

GA: That's . . . a few months. He was not a newswriting teacher for very long. But he took over that class and it was newswriting class.

TC: Footnote one. Yoshida by that time was the territorial as high school senior, was the Territorial Debate Champion. When he went to the University of Hawai'i he was the best debater at UH for like four years. They would begin their debate season with intramural debates and suddenly when he was a freshman the freshman team won the debate.

GA: Oh. Do you have tapes of his speaking?

TC: No.

GA: That's very unfortunate, because he—it's hard to say how good a speaker he was but his, the depth of his voice. . . . He didn't speak like an Oriental. You couldn't tell he was Oriental when he spoke.

TC: So you had this direct teaching experience with him, which I didn't know at this. . . .

GA: But for a short period of time I think he came to relieve some teacher, who must have left because I don't remember him being a newswriting teacher very long.

TC: Do you remember the next point at which you somehow thought you intersected with him?

GA: I think I had contact with him during that—in between. But the time when I really came in good contact with him was at an Emergency Services meeting. I was a student at McKinley and I was invited to attend some of those meetings. I went and being a very shy high school student, I didn't say very much and I kind of sat in the back and I'd listen to what was going on. But Shigeo Yoshida really stood out in my mind.

TC: Did you have a sense that he was—how would you describe his role in those meetings? In terms of what you sensed. You know sometimes you sense different people . . .

GA: Very eloquent, but also he made a lot of sense. You know, about what the Japanese Americans ought to be very careful about and about how after the war—and he was more concerned after the war rather than just during the war—after the war going to become very important for Japanese Americans to do things properly.

TC: Do you remember what his definition of “properly” was?

GA: I think he was referring to people coming back after the war and finding their rightful places in the community. Being unafraid to—you see Japanese Americans at that time were, even all the 442 people, were kind of laid back and they felt it was not their role to get too much involved. It was only after the war experience that they came back—the young people—Daniel Inouye and others began to feel that they had a role to play. They played a very important role in wartime, they come back and have to play a very important role in peacetime. They can't stop doing that. That's what Shigeo Yoshida really was saying to that Emergency Services group. That there would come a time when

- the war is all over, when you can't be laid back and you got to be more assertive and you got to participate in the affairs of the community.
- TC: Did he play any role in—well, if you look at the overall functioning of those meetings you went to, would you say that he was orchestrating the meeting overall?
- GA: He and Mitsuyuki Kido.
- TC: With Kido.
- GA: The two of 'em.
- TC: Yeah, and together they weren't exactly running it with heavy hand but they were framing the whole thing.
- GA: That's right. Yeah.
- TC: Yeah, that's what I thought. I've read the transcripts of some of . . .
- GA: My homeroom teacher, Mrs. Miyamoto, her husband was Stanley Miyamoto, and Stanley Miyamoto was very active in the Emergency Services Committee also, but he was not the same level as Mitsuyuki Kido and Shigeo Yoshida. Those are the three that I remember very well.
- TC: You were a student body president I think by that time.
- GA: I was senior class president.
- TC: Senior class president. How do you think you were invited though, to the meetings? It's so extraordinary to me that you were even there. There were very few students there right? Or were you the only one?
- GA: Well, I was senior class president but I was very active. I represented McKinley at several oratory contests. We had forums we did with other schools. In many ways I tried to participate in the activities outside of our school. I don't know how I got selected.
- TC: You don't know how you were selected. You don't know that Yoshida said that you should come.
- GA: No, I didn't know that.
- TC: Do you remember having any contact one-to-one with Yoshida at these meetings? Or, any acknowledgement that you had previously known each other?
- GA: No.
- TC: No. Nothing.

GA: I think the one who knew me most of the three was Stanley Miyamoto because his wife was my homeroom teacher, and she was the one who told George Akita and me that he was going to become a politician and I was going to become a college professor.

(Laughter)

TC: Oh, she's the one. She taught at McKinley then?

GA: Central Intermediate School.

TC: Central. But, you were still aware of her being related—being a spouse of—Stanley Miyamoto . . .

GA: He used to come over to the school from time to time, and I used to meet Stanley there.

TC: And, what did he do? I know his name but that's about it.

GA: I don't know what he did. I don't know what his work was.

TC: You know, you'd be interested because since we last talked about this what I realize is Yoshida was the organizer of the Emergency Services Committee. He then would set up chairpersons or then ultimately the staff person was Kido. Like he had [Masaji] Marumoto, his first chairman, and he'd be vice-chairman. In the mean . . .

GA: I don't even remember Marumoto in that setting.

TC: Yeah, Marumoto probably was not there. He was probably gone by that time. For the MIS. Okay so, I guess that was all I wanted, but I'm honestly so interested in that and your recollection is, rare. You know the number of people who actually knew him during the war is practically nil now. The fact that you were a student is the only explanation for it. Very, very interesting. All right so, I think we got to go. Got to get you out the door.

MK: Governor, thank you! Thank you for today. And we'll continue.

GA: Thank you for bringing some of the memories out.

(Laughter)

WN: Well, we'd like to continue this if we can. We didn't even get to McKinley yet.

MK: We didn't finish Central. We didn't finish Ka'iulani. Well, we kind of finished. But we have to do Central and McKinley.

GA: I'm surprised how these memories come back when you ask me. I never thought about some of the things that they did there.

MK: And interesting yeah, how people are interconnected.

TC: Yeah.

WN: Yeah, that Torigoe, that's a . . .

MK: Yeah, this is interesting.

GA: The guy who peed.

(Laughter)

MK: What a story!

GA: I'm eighty-eight, he must be . . .

MK: In the nineties?

GA: Eighty-nine or ninety.

MK: Are you eighty-eight this year?

GA: No, I'm eighty-six, yeah.

WN: So in March you make eighty-seven. That's . . .

GA: I make eighty-six in March.

WN: So in March of [20]13 you're going to be eighty-seven. That's your *beiju*.

MK: *Beiju*.

WN: Eighty-eight, right? *Beiju* you know that, are you familiar with *beiju*?

MK: Japanese counting.

GA: One year, yeah. When you're born, you're one year old, like . . .

WN: Right. So in that sense you're eighty-eighth birthday is coming up, in March.

GA: The Japanese did that. But it makes a lot of sense because when you're born, they talk like you're one year old. Your first year.

WN: Because the way we do it in Western—in essence you're zero. Until your first birthday. Which sounds kind of strange. That's why I go by months. Six months. Eight months.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: Because at my family store, the biggest business was when families would come in to say, "Oh we're going have our sixtieth—our father's sixtieth birthday," so they want to buy the favors. So we would do a lot of that so I was very familiar with *yakudoshi*, you know the . . .

GA: *Kanreki*.

WN: *Kanreki* and *beiju*.

GA: Yeah yeah.

WN: So yeah yours is coming up.

GA: Yeah. My grandson tells me I have to live until—he wants me to live until 100 when he'll be all through with college. I tell him, "Okay I got to take care of myself then."

MK: Yeah, that's incentive!

WN: This is your younger grandson, this is not Skyler. I mean Sky.

GA: Not Sky. This is, Ryo-*kun*. They wanted to name him after me, so instead of being George Ryoichi Ariyoshi, his first name is Ryoichi. George second, middle name.

WN: Oh yeah? How nice.

MK: That's good.

GA: So they ask him about oh, "What do you want to be?" he said, "I think I want to become governor."

(Laughter)

WN: Well, it's possible, that's the thing.

GA: Well, you folks be in touch with Kay to work out the schedule? Okay.

TC: What's your sense of, Governor if . . .

GA: I'm enjoying this because I'm recollecting things I had forgotten.

TC: You know we took up two half-days of this week. What if we took up two half-days next week if all other things being equal. If that seems about right or . . .

GA: If it fits into the schedule, I'm prepared. I'm willing.

TC: Okay.

MK: We'll work it out. We're okay. We're glad you're enjoying it.

WN: We're good, yeah.

TC: We're enjoying it.

MK: Is it clear?

GA: Yeah. I'm thinking about things I never thought about before. I had forgotten.

WN: Good.

MK: That's good.

GA: So I can say things to my grandchildren now. Tell them some of the things I got, going through with you folks.

WN: And we'll get you the transcript of all of this so that you'll have it written out.

GA: Thank you.

WN: But these are interesting things to tell your grandson. (Laughs)

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-3-3-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

May 14, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

WN: Okay, today is May 14, 2012 and we're interviewing Governor George R. Ariyoshi. This is session number three. So good morning Governor.

GA: Good morning.

WN: Good morning again.

(Laughter)

MK: We'll continue as with last time. Shift your mind way back to the times when you were at Central Intermediate. You mentioned that at Central Intermediate you had your core classes with Mrs. Hamada. We were wondering, what are core classes?

GA: Core classes were generally about citizenship. Everything else that was not taught in the other classes were taught in core classes—about history, about citizenship. It was there for example that we had a study on vocation, occupation. That's when I thought about it and that's when I decided I wanted to become a lawyer.

MK: You mentioned that Mrs. Hamada arranged your meetings with Yasutaka Fukushima and Arthur Trask. Was that sort of meeting arranged for other children too?

GA: No, it was a special meeting arranged two private individuals—separately. Mrs. Hamada wanted me to go and meet with them. I had talked about, "I don't know whether I want to be a journalist or whether I want to be a lawyer," so she decided I should be exposed to—I was exposed to writing the school paper—but she wanted me to talk to somebody in a new profession.

MK: Say if another child in her class said, "I want to be a doctor." Did Mrs. Hamada arrange say a meeting for that child to go meet a doctor?

GA: I think she would have. If she felt, I think, that the child was very serious and very much interested. I think in my case she felt really very strongly toward—leaning toward—me being a journalist or becoming a lawyer. I think she was that kind of person also. She went beyond the classroom in trying to find ways to help her students.

MK: You mentioned your interest in journalism. Where did that interest come from?

GA: I took a class in newswriting and I started to write for the newspaper. I'm not sure where along the line but at some point I met Shigeo Yoshida; he became our teacher. But he was not our teacher at the very beginning. I'm trying to think about who my newswriting teacher was and I can't remember. (Chuckles)

MK: I was wondering in those days what kind of reading matter did you have in your home?

GA: (Pauses) Encyclopedia Britannica (chuckles).

MK: How about newspapers?

GA: (Pauses) No. You're talking about Central Intermediate School, yeah?

MK: Mm-hmm [yes]. For your mom and dad, how did they hear about what was happening in Hawai'i or in the world?

GA: They had Japanese papers. *Nippu Jiji* and. . . .

WN: The *Hawai'i Hochi*?

GA: *Hawai'i Hochi. Hawai'i Hochi* and *Nippu Jiji*.

MK: For yourself would you take a look at those Japanese newspapers too?

GA: No, I had enough Japanese in Japanese[-language] school.

(Laughter)

MK: I thought I'd better ask that question. You also mentioned that you were the defense counsel—or was it prosecutor—on your student court. What was that?

GA: We had a student court you know. It was to take care of people who didn't obey the student laws at Central. Mrs. Hamada approached—I don't know who she talked to but she got me appointed as a defense counsel. So I was the defense counsel for every person who came before the court.

MK: What kind of infractions could a student commit back then?

GA: (Pauses) Being late frequently. Not obeying some of the laws. Like we had to go to the cafeteria and there were rules we had to follow—don't cut in line. Those kind. They were very simple things but it was more an opportunity for the students to understand that there were rules that had to be followed and that we have ways of taking care of people who have frequent infractions of the rules. It was the students' way of saying that we have a system. Within the school system we had our own way of taking care of rules that needed to be followed.

WN: Do you remember how the system worked in terms of you being the student—student court? Was it sort of based upon principles of checks and balances and democracy and so forth?

GA: I think it was more a desire on the part of schools to let us know that there is a judiciary system out there and if you violate the laws, you got to appear before the court and you're going to face the penalties. It was, I think, Central Intermediate's way of letting people know that we have something within our own—it's our own way. We don't have rules of evidence or anything like that to follow—we do everything our way—but primarily to let them know, let the students know, that outside we have more formal rules. We have to abide by them while we're in school also.

MK: At that level was there a student government too?

GA: Yes, yes.

MK: How active were you in that?

GA: I was not very active in the student government at Central Intermediate. The most active person that I can think of is George Akita, and he was everywhere.

(Laughter)

GA: George Akita was the one who. . . . One of my teachers—I think it was Mrs. Miyamoto—who told us, “You're going to become a politician.” She tells me I was going to become a college professor. I'm not sure how she determined that but that's what she always talked to us about and George Akita and me sometimes talk about that. Our roles got switched.

(Laughter)

MK: What did you think when Mrs. Miyamoto said, “George, I think you'll be a college professor.”

GA: I didn't think anything about that because by that time I think I had already made up my mind that I was going to become a lawyer.

MK: After Central Intermediate you went to McKinley High School. How was that transition for you going from Central to McKinley?

GA: I thought it was very easy. Very normal. We expected it to be different. When I went to McKinley I started to write for the *Daily Pinion*. So, I was one of two sophomores who got to be reporters for the *Daily Pinion*. The other person was Herman Lum, who I appointed as CJ [chief justice] at one point and who died not too long ago.

MK: To be appointed as a writer for the *Daily Pinion* at that level that's a pretty big honor and responsibility.

GA: I didn't think of it as an honor, but I looked forward to being able to report on things that were happening and write about them in our school paper.

MK: At McKinley you had things like ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps].

GA: I was in ROTC also.

MK: What was your experience like in ROTC?

GA: Well, it was very short. Almost no experience because it was so short—because the war started. Pearl Harbor had been bombed in December. Just a few months I was in ROTC. I only know that they told us how to polish our belt buckle.

(Laughter)

WN: What kind of ROTC cadet were you?

GA: I think a private starting off like everybody else.

(Laughter)

WN: You had no aspirations to continue with it.

GA: No (laughs).

WN: You know you said earlier that you had thoughts of being a journalist. I was just wondering, did your encounter with Shigeo Yoshida have anything to do with this aspiration?

GA: No. I felt like that before I met Shigeo Yoshida. I'm trying to think of whom I—oh, I know, Mrs. [Shizuko] Ouchi. Mrs. Ouchi was the journalist newswriting teacher at that time. She's the mother of Ouchi who became very famous as a writer. Something "X".

WN: William Ouchi.

GA: Yeah yeah yeah.

MK: Theory Z.

WN: Theory Z.

GA: Theory Z, yeah. That was his mother—Mrs. Ouchi.

WN: Is that right? She was a journalism teacher at Central?

GA: Yes.

WN: I see.

GA: She was a journalism teacher so she was also the advisor to the student newspaper.

WN: Oh okay. The Central student newspaper?

GA: Yes.

WN: Oh okay. We can look that up.

You know when you made the transition from Central to McKinley when you mentioned core studies earlier I always associated core studies with McKinley, Miles Cary [principal at McKinley], and so forth. I'm really surprised to hear that the exposure to core studies actually began earlier for a lot of students like you.

GA: Yes, right.

WN: Was there any transition or change from the Central Intermediate core studies program to the McKinley?

GA: I think it was no change really. We did the same kind of studies. But I think we were exposed to—we did more forums and group discussions. We had a forum team at one point. I was a member of that group. It's almost like instead of debate team we had a forum team. We went out and we worked with other high schools.

WN: Do you remember what some of the topics were in that day in forums? This is like late [19]30s right?

GA: [Nineteen] forties, in the nineteen forties.

WN: This is in the forties already. Okay.

GA: I think we had lots of questions about the war. We had questions about public service. Topics—not questions—topics about the war, about public service.

MK: Were the topics generated by the students or by the teachers?

GA: I think both. Talking to the teachers and the students and expressing our interest in several different kind of topics. I found that was Miles Cary's last year—in fact he was not there for the full year. He left right after the war was—because he was asked to go to, I think, Poston. I had not been greatly exposed to Miles Cary all the time but whenever I met him he always talked about what a nice day it is. "What a beautiful day. Let's make the most of the day that we have." It was always let's make the most of what we have.

MK: Was that something that he said to all students as a group or just in passing?

GA: In passing . . . Because I did not have a formal occasion to sit and discuss—talk—with him personally. But he used to walk around campus quite a bit. Whenever we met him, when I saw him, I was, "Hi, Dr. Cary."

He would say, "Hi. What a beautiful day. Make the most of it today. Don't lose it today."

MK: You mentioned those forums. Where were these forums held? Who participated?

GA: I recall we had a group of about four or five people. I remember going to Roosevelt High School. I don't remember going to Farrington [High School]. I think I remember one at

Roosevelt and they had some students there and we got together and we talked about the same kind of things from our own perspective.

MK: Going back to your activities at McKinley—you had ROTC, you were a writer for the *Daily Pinion*—what other activities were you participating in?

GA: (Pauses) During my junior year. . . . Right after the war started, we had to once a month go out to the plantations—sugar plantation or pineapple fields—as our effort to help out in the war effort. We also took part in war bond drives in trying to raise money and selling bonds. So that was very—that’s what we did right after the war. We had to be off the street by six o’clock, so our activities were very limited.

I used to like to play baseball, but I couldn’t when I went to McKinley. I did for a short while, once in a while. But, my mother wanted to be sure that I was home early.

I think it was fairly restricted for us but we had our class-day activities. I was junior class vice president and became senior class president after that. We put on programs at McKinley. Because things were very restricted we tried to entertain so I took part in providing some of the leadership and direction for some programs that we had. We had USO [United Service Organizations] people coming over. They put on programs during our lunch hour. It was not anything very formal. But McKinley High School—the auditorium was used.

I played a little baseball during that period too, but my hours were very restricted.

MK: You mentioned that you were a junior class officer. Was that your first involvement in being elected to something?

GA: Mm-hmm.

MK: How did that come about?

GA: Well, some friends of mine—they pushed me. They felt I should run and I was kind of reluctant and I didn’t know what it meant, what the responsibilities were. But, I was almost drafted by some of my friends and I ran for the first time. During my senior year the same thing happened. The group of people said, “You go run. You run for president. I’ll run for secretary or run for treasurer.” So Vivian Harada at that time became class secretary when I became president. Roy Hirakawa who is a eye doctor.

WN: Oh, Roy Hirakawa. Yes, that’s our optometrist.

GA: Oh yeah?

WN: Yeah.

GA: Roy was the treasurer.

MK: How did you folks run a campaign back then?

GA: I don’t think we ran too much of a campaign.

(Laughter)

GA: I don't know. . . . I think we ran almost unopposed. I don't remember anybody running against me, you know?

WN: Did you look at it more as a issues-oriented type of campaign or was it more popularity contest?

GA: No, it's more fun.

(Laughter)

GA: Because, we were talking about what kind of activities we were going to have. Our senior prom. Senior class day and those kind of things. In between, what we would do.

Because we had curfew (pause) a lot of our classmates got together and we had our own dance sessions.

MK: You sort of kind of touched on the war and how it affected school life at McKinley. I know at that time some McKinley High School students had opportunities to work, say at Pearl Harbor or elsewhere. How about among your group of friends?

GA: I did work at Pearl Harbor. Right after the war started and shortly—oh no, no. Right after the war, shortly after that, we had the Kiawe Corps. That was for USED [U.S. Engineer Department]—we worked for USED. We went out to the Wai'anāe area to clear and cut down a lot of the trees—plants—that were out there. I did that until school started. It was during the summer. . . . I worked at the [pineapple] cannery so it wasn't that first or second. . . . It was not McKinley High School days.

But I do recall working out at Pearl Harbor for a very short period of time. The work that we did was stacking up things. At Pearl Harbor we stacked up canned goods and boxed-up things on a skid. I don't know where it came from but it was all piled up and we stacked up and skids from there then took it away. Then sometimes, we were asked to go from there to warehouses. I don't recall where the warehouses were. But the skids came and then we were taking that and just piling them on. There were sugar and rice and all kinds of things in bags. We got together. Passing up, passing up. Put it up high so that it could be stacked up, way up high.

MK: This was a volunteer effort or paid effort?

GA: No. We got paid for that. That's why they say "USED suckers every day. Fifty cents an hour. Four bucks a day." (Laughs)

MK: So you were a part of the group when students were asked to come out to work in these federal places.

GA: Yes.

MK: As a volunteer though, you worked out in the fields for the sugar or pineapples?

GA: No, we got paid.

MK: You got paid?

GA: Yeah, we got paid. I'm not sure what we got paid but they were very nominal amounts. Nominal amount, but when you figure back in those days the minimum wage was about twenty-five cents an hour.

MK: Up to that point, what jobs had you had?

GA: I worked in a cannery. My first year in a cannery was during my sophomore summer. I worked at Hawaiian Pine[apple]. I worked as—I don't know what they call that. We sent the cans on a skid—we send them to the labeling department. I worked with someone who was more experienced and they would test the can. They'd get a round metal ball at the end of the. . . . And they would just, "tin tin tin tin tin tin." The sound would decide whether or not there might be some defect in the packing—in the canning. So, I worked there for one summer.

During my junior and my senior summer I worked at Libby's [Libby, McNeill and Libby] and I was lucky they offered me a timekeeping job there.

MK: How did you manage that?

GA: I don't know how I got it. When I applied they assigned me to being timekeeper. I was timekeeper for primarily the ladies who were. . . . what do you call that, cleaning the [peeled pineapple] . . .

MK: Trimmers?

GA: Trimmers. Trimmers. There were trimmers who were on contract also. They told me to watch those people very carefully, because they were very good at sending—count pineapples, two and maybe recording three. What they used to do was they had this thing they pressed. When they put the pineapples it goes down—count as one. There were some ladies so good they'd take the pineapple—tap it one time. They let the pineapples go a second time and the count comes through a third time. (Chuckles)

At one point, I was walking up on the plank there. Just walking, looking, and hoping that people would not cheat.

MK: So you were different from the other guys who got to be like tray boys.

GA: Yeah, yeah.

MK: They got to work by the girls. (GA and MK laugh.)

GA: I didn't work by the girls but older girls.

(Laughter)

WN: (Laughs) You mean ladies. (GA laughs.)

You know, getting back to these forums and so forth. This is a really volatile time. Talking about the war, I was just wondering if you remembered any of the topics being mostly national and international in scope as opposed to local in scope? I'm sure there were forums dealing with Germany, and Nazi, and Hitler—Nazism and so forth.

GA: That's right. I think we talked about all of those things. We talked about how bad wars were. How wars got started in certain parts—in Hawai'i, Japan, in Europe, Asia. Hitler.

WN: Did you talk about Japan at all?

GA: Yeah, a little bit. I think the general feeling at that time was that Japan did a terrible thing. They were trying to expand their influence and so they came to attack Hawai'i. The question always was, "Why did they attack Hawai'i? Why did they attack the United States?" At that time information was fairly sparse—we all thought about what reasons they might have had. It was not until later on that the questions of why they attacked—why they felt they had to move ahead—became more evident. But that was kind of thoughts after my time.

MK: Before the war itself started how much awareness did you have about Japan-US relations?

GA: I thought it was good because when the Japanese naval ships came, we used to go and visit them. We used to drink—what's the bottle they'd press the ball down and you can drink that.

MK: *Ramune*.

GA: Oh, yeah yeah. That's right. We used to enjoy drinking that. I remember my mother and some of her friends sold. . . . What do they call that—for safekeeping, hoping that the. . . .

MK: The thousand-stitch belt?

GA: Yes. I remember those kinds of things happening before the war started. I remember the sumo tournaments whenever they came. Where they had the sumo tournaments.

MK: How involved was your father in the sumo tournaments up to that time?

GA: He was one of the organizers. During that period he also wrestled.

MK: So he was still an active sumo wrestler?

GA: Yes. In fact when I came back from law school in 1952, my father told me that he was very concerned that the older *sumōtoris* when they retire—that sumo was going to become almost gone in Hawai'i. He told me while they are still active and while they are still capable he wanted to be sure that he could get some of them put together to help train young sumo wrestlers here in Hawai'i.

My father and I, we built a *dohyō* out on Nu'uaniu [Avenue]. There was a Japanese temple out on Judd Street right off Nu'uaniu. If you go up Nu'uaniu and make a left-hand turn to Judd and about maybe a hundred yards or so off to the left there was a Japanese

temple. So, we approached the temple and they wanted to let us use a portion of their lawn there to build a *dohyō*. So we built a *dohyō* so that the old *sumōtoris* can help train and teach sumo to younger people.

MK: That's a lot of work to build a *dohyō*.

GA: Yes.

WN: So this is after—this is in the [19]50s. After law school.

GA: Yes, 1952.

WN: I see.

GA: [Nineteen] fifty-two, fifty-three thereabouts.

MK: But even till the outbreak of war your father was still active in sumo and the *sumo kyōkai*?

GA: Well, [sumo] almost came to a standstill during the war years. There was no sumo activities. I think my parents tried not to do anything that would be deemed Japanese, and sumo was a Japanese activity.

You know I tell this story about my father jumping ship—not going back on the ship. He's telling me this in 1951. I wondered why my father would not travel. Why he would not come to Michigan State when I graduated. I felt maybe he was concerned that when he traveled if he had to produce documents—passport—that he may get apprehended. So he just stayed here in Hawai'i. I think it was because of that when the war started he was very quiet. In fact the whole family didn't do anything.

MK: For nisei back in those days many were dual citizens. How about you?

GA: I think I was a dual citizen too. I'm not sure, but I assume I was. I was born in 1926 and I think during that period almost every person born was recorded at the Japanese consulate and from that put into the *koseki tōhon* in Japan. I presume. I'm not sure, but I presume that my name was also in the *koseki tōhon* in Fukuoka. [After 1924, nisei were not automatically Japanese citizens. Parents had to register a child at a Japanese consulate within two weeks of a child's birth to be officially registered as a Japanese citizen.]

MK: But as far as you know growing up you were American.

GA: Yes. Yes. I was American and I didn't have some of the discriminatory experiences that others had on the plantation. Whatever differences we had—the fighting that took place—was not because I was Japanese American but it just happened between people.

MK: I was wondering what did your parents say or think about people of other ethnicities?

GA: They never said anything. I don't recall them saying anything. (Pause) I don't recall.

MK: No prohibitions about say playing with the child of a different ethnicity or . . .

GA: No, we played at Children's Park. In the group that I played with we had Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Filipino. We didn't have any Portuguese. But it's a neighborhood that maybe Portuguese were not in. It was Chinese, Japanese—more a Chinese, Japanese town.

MK: We didn't really ask you specific questions yet about the war. When the war started you mentioned that you were going to play Ping[-Pong]—you went to the YBA [Young Buddhist Association]?

GA: On the morning, December 7. We used to go to YBA and about four or five of us used to go very early in the morning. Seven o'clock we used to get out there so we can play Ping-Pong. That's what I was doing—playing Ping-Pong. Then we heard a lot of firing and we thought, "Today they're practicing hard." We thought it was American practice. I did not know about the attack until about eleven o'clock after Sunday school. I got home and my mother told me about the bombing and attack that took place.

The only thing that I saw. . . . The only damage during my entire years in Hawai'i was coming home on Fort Street between Vineyard and School Street, we saw one structure that was extensively damaged. I was told later on that that was a bomb dropped there. But that's the only thing that I saw. After that, during the rest of my years I don't recall seeing anything resulting—damage resulting—from the bombing. Now somebody mentioned that there was a bomb dropped on McKinley High School near the statue. But, I never saw the damages.

MK: When you got home and you found out what was happening, what did you think?

GA: My mother told me. Oh, I did not have to think because my mother told me, "Here's your bag." She had a bag with a strap that I could strap on my back. She had canned goods, various kind of canned goods, and some water that she put in there. She said, "This is yours and in case you have to go someplace be sure that you take it with you." Someplace meant that if we had to evacuate from the house. So she had it all fixed up with every one of my brother and sisters.

MK: Where was your father at that time?

GA: We had just bought the home on Colburn Street. He happened to be out there fixing the house. My father told me that he thought he saw planes with the *Hinomaru*. At that time he wasn't sure what it was.

MK: So at the time war was breaking, your family had purchased property and a home in Kalihi on Colburn Street. Then war starts, and I think you had mentioned that your family had to evacuate to Mānoa.

GA: That's right. We were there for I think about a year and a half. My father was fixing that house on Colburn Street so he got that fixed and we moved back—moved into the Colburn Street property for the first time during my senior year in high school. We had two homes there, so my father fixed two houses. One, my grandpa and grandma lived in. The other house we lived in.

MK: During the war your father's a stevedore. So he couldn't continue being a stevedore. How did you folks manage?

GA: He went to work at a laundry. Pacific Laundry. When he went to work at Pacific Laundry the owner really took to my father because my father worked hard. He got there in the morning, he put the boiler on. My father learned how to take away stains, how to clean clothes and get stains—remove them. So he did that kind of thing and the owner of Pacific Laundry liked my father very much and really took care of him. That's the experience that started him getting his own dry cleaners, R&M Kalihi Dry Cleaners.

MK: Your father could no longer continue as a stevedore because he was Japanese.

GA: That's right.

MK; You folks were moved from your home at Smith . . .

GA: Smith Street yeah.

MK: . . . because you folks were . . .

GA: . . . too close to the waterfront.

MK: . . . were Japanese.

GA: Yes.

MK: How did you feel about that?

GA: I think I felt happy to be in Mānoa.

(Laughter)

WN: Did you have any idea of what was going on and why you had to do it at that time?

GA: I think that my parents mentioned that because of the war and we were close to the waterfront we all had to evacuate. I didn't think anything of it then. I thought it was a normal thing for them to expect us to do. I guess because I enjoyed my years on the farm in Mānoa I really think less about why we had to be there.

MK: I don't think we ever asked you before but when you folks were living at Smith Street, what other people were living near you folks?

GA: Almost all Chinese bachelors who were chefs at various eating places. There was only one Japanese family—Yoshimori family—and he was a watchmaker, watch repair person. Tengu-do [Watch Store]. So every time that we had living there we were close to the Yoshimori family so we would go to play at their house and they would come play with us.

MK: How were your relations with all the Chinese bachelors around there?

GA: They were good to us. They were good to us and they would come back with *manapua* and cakes and candies—Chinese candies. They were really nice to us.

WN: I'm wondering, were they evacuated as well?

GA: I don't know. I don't know.

WN: What about the Yoshimoris, do you know what became of them?

GA: Yeah, they had to evacuate also.

WN: I'm just wondering if it was only the Japanese who were evacuated from that Smith Street area.

GA: I think so. I think only Japanese. . . . because later on I met a Chinese person who was really good to us. I met him someplace on Sumner Street. I asked whether they were continuing to live in the same place. Yeah, I think it was only the Yoshimori family and us.

My father, the way he came to Hawai'i. He wanted to be very quiet. He never talked about whether it was the right thing or wrong thing that happened to them and to us.

MK: The Yoshimori family—were they able to continue their watch repair business or . . .

GA: No, they closed down.

MK: How about your mother's business?

GA: Closed down. Everything. We just left everything and went away. I don't think my parents were even able to sell whatever equipment and things that they had.

MK: It was a big change for them.

GA: Mm-hmm.

MK: By then your father was he still owing money on the Kalihi property?

GA: Mm-hmm. But you know, not much because it was cheap. Back in those days you could buy a place like that in Kalihi for about \$2,000. But \$2,000 was a lot of money. House and lot.

I remember my mother when we evacuated to Mānoa—went to Mānoa—she had. . . . You could only have during that period I think a maximum of \$200. My mother had some monies. So she wrapped it up and she put it in a bottle and she buried it in Mānoa. Later we tried to find that bottle and we couldn't find the bottle. I think if you put something very close to a tree the roots expand and move things around and we could never find that bottle. So all the money that my mother had she put inside the bottle—gone.

My father---Alcohol was rationed. So my mother when they moved to Mānoa she'd get pineapple and she made pineapple swipe for my father. (Laughs) I don't know what it tasted like because I don't drink. My father enjoyed it.

WN: Was it in liquid form or was it more of a mash form? Have you ever seen it?

GA: It was liquid and I recall my mother using yeast. She had a big *tsubo* and she did it in a *tsubo*. The house that we stayed up in—my cousin's place—there was a river running through and my father built something right next to the river—the mountain on the other side. That's where my mother put the jar of money that we couldn't find. She also put the pineapple swipe up against the mountain area also.

WN: (Chuckles) That's very interesting.

MK: What was it like with these multiple households kind of brought together to live together in Mānoa?

GA: In Mānoa? You know my parents they took a small shack that was there. My father fixed that up so that we could live in that shack separately. Most of the time we were in that place by ourselves.

MK: How about things like taking a bath? Access to water? Heat?

GA: We had *furo*. The water stream that came down that was very convenient. That's what my father selected that area for; he wanted that water and for *furo* it was very clean water because we were the last house up there and nobody else was up there. That's the water my cousin used to drink.

I remember—you know what *zuiki* is? *Zuiki* is like a . . . if you look at it it's just like a taro leaf. The stem is like taro, the same kind. They're very similar. You can eat *zuiki* but you can't eat the taro leaf—what you call? Stem, because it makes your mouth very itchy. I remember my mother telling me one day to go and get and cut some *zuiki*. I went and I thought I was cutting *zuiki*—I cut the taro—I brought it back and we all ate it. Everybody would say, "This is making my mouth itchy."

My mother said, "Where did you get this from?" and I pointed at the riverfront, "Oh, that was taro. That was not *zuiki*."

(Laughter)

WN: Coming from Smith Street—a very urban environment—moving up to Mānoa and you enjoyed Mānoa and you also enjoyed Lā'ie and so forth. It seems like you were more of a country boy than a city boy.

GA: Yeah, yeah. During the summer before the war—during several summers—I went for a week, two weeks to stay on the farm at Mānoa and to help. That's when I told you the story about the centipede. I felt that thing crawling up my feet. I tell them, "Something's crawling."

They immediately tell me, “It’s a centipede so don’t push it against your legs and take off your pants and do it slowly so you don’t rub.” When I took it off they said—now they shook it and ho, a big centipede came out!

(Laughter)

WN: Do we have time? Are we doing okay?

MK: So life was very different for you, yeah?

GA: Mm-hmm.

MK: You were going to McKinley during the war years. I’ve heard that at that time too at McKinley, St. Louis [College] kids also occupied the same place.

GA: That’s right.

MK: What was that like?

GA: We really didn’t have any contact with them, except only one time I personally came in contact with Herman Wedemeyer. He was very rascal. We had one week every year or two or three times a year we had to work in the cafeteria. During one time I was working in the cafeteria, Herman Wedemeyer came around and he was teasing—playing with the girls, teasing—the girls. Pulling aprons and things like that. But nobody told him not to do that.

(Laughter)

WN: He became an All-American.

GA: That’s right.

MK: Oh my goodness.

GA: Our proms—our junior prom—we had at Coconut Grove, and the Coconut Grove is our school cafeteria. We moved all the tables off on the side and that became our dance floor.

WN: Where was Coconut Grove?

GA: McKinley High School cafeteria.

WN: Yeah?

GA: We call that the Coconut Grove when we moved. (Laughs)

WN: Oh you call it the Coconut Grove. I see.

GA: Our senior prom was at the Mormon Tabernacle on Beretania Street. We rented the hall there and we pulled the drapes so it became dark—very low light to make it look like a

evening affair. It was from one o'clock to four-thirty, because we had to leave—an hour and a half later we had to be off the street.

So the curfew lasted throughout my entire high school years. When I tell my children, “You know that I never went out at night?” They can't believe that. (Laughs)

WN: Yeah that's. . . .

MK: With your parents being immigrants from Japan and you being raised here in Hawai'i—going to high school and then you start going to things like dances, being with girls, proms, how did they react to things like this?

GA: They didn't say anything because it's more the time we spent away in school. They never really paid too much attention to what we were doing in school.

MK: I know that in some families as long as it was a school affair—something related to *gakkō*, it was okay. How about your parents?

GA: Yeah, that's all I did. Everything was with *gakkō*. We were supposed to be like that because the curfew and school occupied most of our time. Very little time after school to the time we had to be home.

WN: Were there any times that you had a conflict with your identity? You know you're an American citizen but you had Japanese parents who were active in the Japanese community. We're at war with Japan, anything like that?

GA: No, I never did. Except I think when I started to—was invited to—go to the Emergency Service Committee meetings. There the conversation was all about Japanese Americans. What can we expect life to be like. What must we do so that we get seen in the best light. That's the kind of conversation, and I think that's when I first became really aware of me being nisei and having to—in fact I never even thought of myself as nisei Japanese at that time—being Japanese and what kind of impact the war was going to have on us then and into the future.

When I was in high school at that time the 442nd had not volunteered yet. They had not been permitted to volunteer. It was not until (pause) the latter part of 1943 I think that. . . . It was my junior year, the latter part of my junior year, I think that the 442 and MIS was formed. I recall the first casualty that I remember during my senior year was Joe Takata, who was a baseball player that I used to go and watch all the time. He was a very good baseball outfielder and good hitter.

WN: Do you remember when was—when your first. . . . Oh, okay.

Change tapes here.

END OF TAPE NO. 59-3-3-12

TAPE NO. 59-4-3-12

- TC: I think there are interesting questions in the whole period about a sense of impending conflict with Japan. You know 1937—it's like things are coming. Then to what to expect, are there any interior conflicts because Japanese culture is very valued right? The behavior of Japan as a nation—the source of the culture. Those are my thoughts. I'm rolling.
- WN: Governor, earlier I asked you about the subjects of the discussions that you had at McKinley . . .
- GA: Forums. Uh-huh.
- WN: . . . concerning the war and whether or not it was more of a national and international scope or local in scope and you said it was actually both. Did you discuss local things like martial law or anything like that?
- GA: No, you know my generation at that time I think we accepted the fact of martial law, that it was not something we challenged—we felt it was necessary for them to do as a military precaution. It could become very much of a problem if everybody decided that they're going to do their own things irregardless of what they were told not to do. A good example would be, don't let any light come out from your dwelling. When we went outside—wanted to go outside—we had to turn off all the lights because when you open the lights go [shines] out. So we accepted all these things as things that we normally had to do. We never questioned. I think my generation, most of us would never question what authorities were doing.
- I think that's why I became a lawyer. I questioned martial law. Did they have the right to do that in Hawai'i? But while we're living there, there was no question. We abided by them.
- MK: When the war started you were at the YBA [Young Buddhists Association]. After the war, no YBA right?
- GA: (Pause) That's right.
- MK: How did you feel about things like that?
- GA: We just shifted to YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association]. (GA and MK chuckle.)
- WN: Did you do that? Were you at the YMCA during the war?
- GA: During the war, yeah. My junior years and senior years I was a member of the Hi-Y Club. I enjoyed that experience. I still remember my Hi-Y leader, his name was Tokunaga. We called him "Toku." He was very good Hi-Y; we really enjoyed him. Because we enjoyed him so much, after I left McKinley, the Hi-Y Club asked me if I would be their advisor. So I did that until I went into the service.
- MK: How did you get into the Hi-Y Club?
- GA: That was one of the few things we could do. The YMCA at that time was located on Fort Street. . . .

WN: This is Nu‘uanu Y?

GA: Nu‘uanu Y. Yeah. It was right across Central Intermediate School. Was that Nu‘uanu or Fort Street?

WN: I think it was on Fort Street.

GA: Fort Street. Yeah. It was very convenient for us to go to Nu‘uanu Y. We had our meetings there. Hi-Y meetings.

MK: What were the activities? What kinds of activities did you do as a Hi-Y member?

GA: Oh, swim. Talk about social activities. (Pause) That’s about it.

WN: Switching from YBA to YMCA was that any kind of religious changeover for you?

GA: No. You see the YBA, going there was not more a religious kind of thing. It was more we’re going to go there and play Ping-Pong. I was going to Japanese[-language] school. It was part of Hongwanji, but I never thought about Japanese school as being a religious kind of thing.

MK: When you started going to the Hi-Y activities—going to the YMCA—besides Toku were there other young adults or adults that you worked with?

GA: Yeah, the person I remember so clearly is John Young. He was a highly regarded person. All the young people looked up to him and felt that he was very kind, very understanding, very helpful to young kids.

TC: Were you aware of Hung Wai Ching being there?

GA: No.

TC: He was the youth worker. He worked with John. Did you ever see [Shigeo] Yoshida at Nu‘uanu Y during the war? ‘Cause he had a office there you know.

GA: No. I think Hung Wai, Yoshida, was there later in the Emergency Services Committee meetings.

TC: Yeah, they were. John Young was a little bit earlier in your high school [word unclear] side.

GA: Intermediate school. In fact, I was in Central Intermediate—we had shop. Woodshop. The first project we made was a bread board. Just polishing it, cutting it, polishing it and shining it, you know, and taking it home. This was the first thing I ever made like that. So I was very proud to take that home and show my parents, this bread board I made.

Next project was a necktie rack. Little bit more complicated. I finished that and I wanted to take it home and it was still wet. I told the teacher, “I want to bring it home.”

He tell me, “It’s wet. The paint’s wet yet so you can’t do that.”

I tell him, “I want to take it home and show my parents.” I begged him.

So he said, “Okay be very careful.” So I had to hold my necktie rack like—all paint is very nice like this. And go to my next class and put it down. . . . very nicely so that I wouldn’t make any marks on it. [A classmate] wanted to touch. I told him, “Don’t touch! It’s wet yet. Wet paint. Don’t touch yet.” But when I was not looking he went and he touched it and he made a mark on it. I was angry that he made a mark. As soon as I saw that, my hands went up and I slapped him in the face like that. This was right in the classroom.

After school I was going to—walking toward—Japanese school. Central Intermediate School at that time the building kitty-corner going across to Fort and Kukui Street. The YMCA was right across there. John Young happened to be there when I started to walk like this. This guy came and he and his friend—two of them—came up from the other side. I knew they were going to try to take it out on me. So I didn’t say anything and I kept on walking. They came and so I stopped. They stood right in front of me. They were going to attack me. I was holding my necktie rack and I had to defend myself. Because I grabbed the necktie rack I smeared the paint already, so I was holding it like this and the two of them came to me and I started to whack with the necktie rack.

John Young saw that across the street. He only saw me hitting them. He came running across. He told me, “Stop! Stop! Stop!”

I told him, “This is my necktie rack,” and I explained to him why—he wanted to know how come I was trying to attack these two boys—explained to him what had happened.

He said, “They shouldn’t have done that. But, you shouldn’t do that either.”

I told him, “I can’t help it. They’re coming for me. I’m not going after them. They’re coming after me.”

So he told me, “Okay, but stop already. Don’t do it,” so he stopped us from going any further. That’s how I remember John Young really, really well. (Chuckles)

MK: That’s your first encounter with John Young.

GA: I knew John Young and I knew what he was doing with young people. So he was a very famous person.

TC: The reason I know that you were on the younger side was I just read an account where he [John Young] moved to Kaua’i during. . . . Once the 442 started to organize he moved to Kaua’i because he took over Reverend Masao Yamada’s church so Reverend Masao Yamada could go with the 442. He was Japanese.

GA: Kaua’i? On Kaua’i?

TC: Yeah. He was an ordained minister among his many . . .

GA: I didn't know that. If you ask young people my age at that time if you can name some people that they know. Some Caucasian person. I think one or two of the first names would be John Young.

TC: In his oral history he said, "I only knew about twelve *haoles* myself."

(Laughter)

WN: He had a Chinese last name though.

(Laughter)

WN: Maybe that made him a little different.

GA: That's right. I always thought Young was Chinese name. All the Youngs I knew growing up were all Chinese. Clarence Young. (Laughs)

WN: You mentioned that going to Emergency Service Committee meetings. Do you remember when your first meeting was and why you ended up going?

GA: I think it was during my senior year. I was one of few young people. I'm not certain how they selected me and why they invited me to come. There were not many of us who were invited to the meetings. I went to a number of meetings and you know, I'm a young person. When you listen to a person like Shigeo Yoshida talk very eloquently you're kind of afraid to say anything. So I was very quiet—I just listened.

WN: Were you the only young McKinley High School student? Were there classmates there too?

GA: No I don't recall anybody else. I don't know whether or not it's because I was president of my class at that time but I recall one or two young people from other schools. I don't know who they were.

MK: When you were invited to these meetings, what made you accept the invitation to come to these meetings?

GA: Because I was very curious. Because I also knew that this was a group that was very concerned about the plight of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i. So I wanted to go and I wanted to listen. More I wanted to go and listen to find out what this thinking was, rather than me participating.

MK: How big were these meetings?

GA: Not very big. Maybe twenty, twenty-five. Maybe not even that many. The people I remember who were there were Shigeo Yoshida, Stanley Miyamoto, Mitsuyuki Kido. I can't remember the other names.

WN: Ernest Murai?

GA: No. There wasn't an Ernest Murai there.

WN: Katsuro Miho?

GA: Katsuro. Katsuro.

I met Ernie Murai later on after I came back from law school and he was very active in the Democratic Party.

MK: How about Shunzo Sakamaki?

GA: Sakamaki. Sakamaki.

TC: Masa Katagiri?

GA: I don't remember him.

TC: Hung Wai [Ching], was Hung Wai ever there?

GA: I didn't know Hung Wai so I didn't know at that time. Katagiri I knew. He was a baseball player. Shortstop on Asahi baseball team.

TC: Masa Katagiri was?

GA: Katagiri yeah. Masa Katagiri.

TC: I didn't know that.

WN: Do you remember how the meetings were run? Was it a formal agenda or was it more like a friendly . . .

GA: Yeah that's what it was. Everybody just came together. Nobody really in charge but talking about somebody getting things started—about concerns that they had about the future. Everybody talking. It was not led by anybody.

WN: Do you remember any arguments or disagreements at all?

GA: No. No. That group if I were to look back at them now it's not a very. . . . As individuals they're not argumentative people. If they disagreed they wouldn't say very much about disagreeing but they would raise some other thoughts. I think that's what I would classify as a very unusual group of people coming together in very unusual ways. You know today, somebody takes the lead, and bang bang bang, go ahead and try to push an agenda through and talk about subject matter—it [the meetings] never were like that.

The concern was the future of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i and what they have to do in order to make it possible for the future to be better. You have the people who are already being acknowledged for their loyalty on the battlefield, but what happens after that? That was a great deal of concern about what happens after the war is over. When they come back, what kind of life will they come back to? How do they continue to be meaningful members of a community?

MK: At any point did they address questions to you or the other younger people there?

GA: No. Nobody asked me any questions.

(Laughter)

I think when you think about the makeup that's not discussion back in those days. Today everybody talks and raise questions about somebody. I think we were more cordial. We didn't challenge. Not me, but they didn't challenge what somebody else said. They expressed some ideas but never anybody else challenging what somebody else had said or done.

WN: You remember Shigeo Yoshida as being a very eloquent speaker. As a public speaker I'm sure he was but in meetings like this did he show a lot of eloquence as well?

GA: Yeah, because he wasn't putting on anything. That's Shigeo Yoshida. That's what it was. Whether it's in a public or private conversation he was very eloquent. To the point which scared some of us.

WN: Yeah, I was going to ask. It must have been intimidating for you.

GA: Uh-huh.

TC: Do you remember where the meetings were?

GA: At the Nu'uanu Y.

TC: Just a wild guess—I know it's very hard to remember this. Do you have any notion of how many of those meetings you went to?

GA: How many of those meetings I went to? (Pause) Three or four.

TC: Do you remember one of them as being a bigger session—quite a few more people there—and it being more of a conference-type thing? Maybe even people coming from the neighbor islands? Does that ring a bell?

GA: I don't remember neighbor island people coming.

TC: But you remember something bigger?

GA: Yeah. That's the meeting we sat in the back.

TC: You sat in the back?

GA: Yeah.

TC: You were the kids.

(Laughter)

WN: Was John Burns at any of these meetings?

GA: No.

TC: What do you remember of the tenor of the bigger meeting being? Was it also at the Y? It had to be a little more formal just to manage that many—how big do you think it was?

GA: I think it was and you know I kind of recollect that the person who was in charge of that meeting was Stanley Miyamoto. That's my recollection. That Stanley Miyamoto at that big meeting kind of took the lead and put the business through.

TC: There's an extensive written record of that meeting and I ought to get you a copy realizing that you were there. I'll try to remember to do that.

GA: Yeah I'd like to see that.

TC: It was a very thoughtful discussion. It was very thoughtful discussion. That's actually . . .

GA: Yeah, the records of those meetings. Oh, I'd love to see them.

TC: But essentially, trying to map a more democratic—not big *D* Democratic party—but just a more democratic society and a society based on equal opportunity.

GA: I remember that theme. How do we Japanese Americans—what do we do and how do we get accepted? What's our role and how do we try to provide for that kind of future? Not just for us, but especially for those who will be coming back from the war. And a great deal of concern about what kind of life the veterans come back to and how they're going to be treated. When those kinds of discussions took place the 442nd and the 100th had not yet established the kind of record—the war records—they had established later on. That was not that well known.

MK: You know when you were in high school, what people did you know who joined the service?

GA: Daniel Inouye. Dan was two years ahead of—he was a senior when I was a sophomore. I know Dan personally. . . . (Pause) I didn't know many. I know my uncle—he volunteered for MIS. Shigeto Kanemoto. Shigeto was a senior when I was a sophomore.

MK: Later on when you would read about these young men joining the service, going off to war, what did you think?

GA: I was scared for them because for me war was a terrifying experience. To become a soldier. To shoot and to be shot at. I was very concerned they were being placed in that kind of situation. I didn't think about it then but later on I thought about the MIS [Military Intelligence Service] people.

See when I got drafted into the service in about the time the war in Europe was coming to an end. When I was taking my basic training the war in Japan came to an end. During that period I had heard about MIS people, 442 and 100 were all together, but MIS—one or two MIS members joining different groups. I kept on hearing about how they were looked upon with suspicion, that they weren't totally accepted at the very beginning at least until they got to see how work was being done. So I felt very badly for the MIS

members who first went abroad during the war and got assigned to companies that were mostly non-Japanese.

MK: For yourself you graduated from McKinley. I guess before we go away from McKinley, how did you fare at McKinley as a student?

GA: I did very well and again I had a special interest in math. We had a math teacher who was a football coach—Frank Hluboky. From him I went into. . . the high math—solid geometry, trigonometry. There were only about six or seven of us who were in solid geometry and trigonometry classes.

I enjoyed my math and I think it carried over when I was governor when my budget came up before me. They would just give it to me and I looked at numbers and I could tell them, “Check those numbers.”

I remember the first time I said that, Eileen Anderson [Budget and Finance Director] told me, “We were told that you were very knowledgeable. You could catch some of these math things. So we were very careful and we checked it and we would get it and bring it to you for the first time and you’d just look at it and you’d find things that don’t jibe.” I have my collective bargaining people come out to give me a list of—if certain rate were given this is the amount of the general fund and this amount is the special fund and give me seven or eight different options.

I would look at it and I could say, “Check this number,” and they’d pull out their slide rule and start checking it.

They’d tell me, “Oh see they made a mistake.”

I think I was really good in math and I talked to Frank Hluboky and I told him I wanted to become a lawyer and he told me, “It will not hurt you to be good in math too.” He said, “You continue this work.”

My time at the university when I first went there, the top math students—engineering and math, calculus and so forth—were not Punahou or ‘Iolani. The top was my McKinley classmates. They were really Frank Hluboky’s students. Frank Hluboky used to tell us, “I expect only one person that I can really say is my pride and joy, and that person is Watanabe,” and Watanabe was a teacher at the university, “He is my pride and joy. He is the one person I can feel very comfortable that he can outdo anybody else.”

WN: Was this Kenichi Watanabe?

GA: Kenichi Watanabe. Kenichi Watanabe.

MK: Physicist.

WN: Physics. Yeah, physics.

TC: Do you remember how many of your teachers were Caucasian or whether you had any teachers who were not Caucasian even?

GA: I had a lot of Caucasian teachers. Sophomore years. Mrs. [Ruth] King, core studies. (Pause) Mrs. Freitas was my junior class. Mrs. Dow, senior class. . . . They were all mixed—very mixed—in McKinley.

TC: I know earlier I did an analysis like the 1924 famous class. At that point they were all Caucasian.

GA: Chinn Ho's class yeah?

TC: Yeah. But apparently it started---they were starting to get teachers who were trained in [Territorial] Normal [and Training] School and university. I guess it was having an impact on your faculty makeup.

GA: Wait now I thought there were lots of—it was really mixed but. . . . Maybe it was very heavily Caucasian. Mrs. Dow, Miss Keys. . . .

TC: Were they people from the Mainland mostly? Do you remember that?

GA: Yeah mostly.

WN: Were there any Japanese teachers?

GA: (Pause) I can't think of any Japanese teacher.

WN: Because when you talk about Central, Mrs. Hamada, Mrs. Miyamoto just come right out at you. But it's funny that McKinley didn't have.

GA: We had teachers like—I can't remember her name now. She was not Japanese, she was a mixture. She was really tough. She'd walk into the boys restroom and find out if anything bad was going on there. (MK and WN laugh.)

MK: Oftentimes when we read about you, the story about Mrs. Hamada always seems so . . .

GA: Mrs. Hamada was not Japanese.

MK: Mrs. Hamada was not Japanese?

GA: No, she. . . . she was mixed, all kind of races. She was married to a Japanese person who was a Mr. Hamada who at that time was at Leahi Hospital with TB. I met Mr. Hamada many times after that.

MK: So Mrs. Hamada was mixed?

GA: Yes.

MK: Not Japanese.

I was wondering were there other teachers who had an impact on you say like at McKinley?

- GA: Not one like Mrs. Hamada. For three years she was there. I remember teachers like Mrs. Dow who was my core studies and our senior class advisor that we were very close to. She was really nice. Mrs. Freitas my junior class, she was our junior class advisor. My sophomore class everything all broken up.
- TC: As the war occurs and there is this initial shock and you have to regroup and move and so on. You said that you had considered yourself quote, “Japanese,” and that even this generational distinction of nisei hadn’t really kicked in.
- GA: I don’t remember the word nisei—ever hearing the word nisei—during that time.
- TC: Do you remember the words “American of Japanese Ancestry,” AJA starting to kick in or does that ring any bells?
- GA: Later on but I don’t think when I was at McKinley AJA was something we acknowledged. I think it was just---we never even said Japanese-American. We’re Japanese.
- TC: Among the Japanese you were raised with quite a lot of cultural reference. You didn’t fight language school like a lot of the kids. Then suddenly Japan is the enemy. Japan is vilified and despised. How did that play out inside of you?
- GA: I think I was Japanese but I was not Japan Japanese. I was Japanese in Hawai‘i and I didn’t have that kind of feelings for Japan as a country. Nobody really---I didn’t experience any kind of discrimination to make me feel that I had to think about what I was.
- TC: Did you have any feeling that you were—I know there were first-generation people who when they emigrated they emigrated to the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. When they would be confronted even during the war they would still talk about Hawai‘i as if it was Hawai‘i where their—that was their thing, that was their place. Their heart’s actually with Hawai‘i. Was that, you think, still part of your thing that like your focus was maybe at the very early stages as much about Hawai‘i as it was about the USA? Do you see what I’m driving at? It was a distinction. People who were very attached to Hawai‘i. Does this ring any bells?
- GA: I don’t think it’s a question of attachment. But it’s just that I think Japanese like myself—I consider myself—I’m Japanese. I’m not thinking of Japanese from Japan. I just happened to be of Japanese ancestry and that’s what I consider myself. The words AJA, nisei, were not part of our vocabulary. I also feel that amongst the Japanese, there were many people who came who were living in Hawai‘i but who were planning to go back to Japan also. There were some of those kinds of Japanese. I knew some of them who went back to Japan before the war started. But for me I don’t think it was the question Japanese meant we were Japanese-something. Japanese-that or Japanese-this.
- WN: What about the distinction between your father’s generation and your generation? Was there anything like that? Did you just call them parents who came from Japan and you folks were Japanese who were born in Hawai‘i?

GA: Yeah, even for my parents I don't think we made that kind of distinction about who they were. If anybody asked me what your parents are it's, "I'm Japanese." They were not American citizens either but I still considered them to be Japanese living here in Hawai'i.

WN: Did you know any *kibei* growing up or at Central or McKinley?

GA: I didn't know of any *kibei*.

WN: You didn't know of any. I was just wondering what you folks—your generation—called *kibei* back then.

GA: I think we---I didn't know if any person who was *kibei* who went back. Oh wait, I take that back. I had a friend, who in elementary school—I mentioned the Yoshimori family was the other Japanese family living there yeah. They had a good friend. What was the son's name? Anyway, they had a good friend. They had two sons. One son was my classmate, one was older. During the war, the two brothers got split because one went back to Japan and he got caught out there. He couldn't come back. But, he didn't go to study. He went there for a visit and he just got caught in the war there.

WN: So prior to the war starting he went to Japan.

GA: Mm-hmm. It was sad for that family because one son here and one son over there.

TC: Part of my questions are---I read these McKinley High School annuals of something that preceded you actually, but they made a big impression on me. McKinley High School annuals were full of praise for, celebration of, what they called *aloha*—then called—*aloha* spirit. And, I wonder if you remember references to the *aloha* spirit and to Hawai'i on the one hand was this plantation system. But everybody is talking about Hawai'i as a place where races get along pretty well with each other and *aloha* spirit. I wonder about that.

GA: I think we never talked too much about it because we didn't have to. We got along. It didn't make any difference who we were. We got along. That's why Jack Burns when he asked me about my growing up and he asked me about discrimination and I told him, "I didn't feel anything." I was not a plantation child and I was living outside of the plantation. So I went to school with people of all kinds of backgrounds. Studied together, worked together, fought also but they were all individual basis.

This one boy that I talked about I remember the name now, Sonoda. The younger one Sonoda was my classmate. Some of the fights I had, he fought with me. He fought alongside me. He helped me.

WN: As you've told your story—your life story—there were instances you were discriminated against, right? Because for one when you moved out of Smith Street you said earlier that you were moved out because you were Japanese living near the harbor.

GA: Yeah.

WN: If you were non-Japanese living near the harbor maybe upon your recollection they weren't.

GA: Uh-huh [yes].

WN: That's just my comment that I think you were discriminated against.

GA: Except that at that time I didn't feel I was discriminated against. I felt that it was a necessary precaution that the military was taking so that there would be no trouble later on.

WN: Right, right. Interesting though that you look at something retrospectively from the context of today you can make different conclusions as compared to what you were thinking at the time.

GA: Yeah. Like today I feel that the martial law decree, declarations were very, very wrong. The military had no right to do that because it had nothing to do with the battle—the military efforts. But they just took control of everything out here. They suspended all governmental action. The martial law became the way they ruled. That's very wrong, but I never thought about it being wrong at that time. I felt it was very necessary for them to conduct, be concerned about the war efforts.

TC: Were you aware of the Japanese American officeholders being pressured to withdraw from office or not run during the war?

GA: Not during the war.

TC: You didn't know about that.

GA: I felt after the war there was some concerns from Japanese Americans about too many Japanese. See when I talked about going to run for office—Lieutenant Governor—Jack Burns told me, “Go talk to Dan Inouye. And go talk to Spark Matsunaga and see what kind of reactions that they have.” There was some concern. They express in so many ways of not being against me but they expressed a concern about we've got so many Japanese running at the top level now. So, we have that kind of concern on the part of Japanese because they were concerned it presented a racial imbalance and maybe the public might take it out on them. It's all very political.

TC: Back in 1942 election. You were not aware that the Japanese—the people who were in the territorial legislature then—they suddenly didn't run again. You didn't know about that at the time?

GA: No I didn't. But anything that kind of pro-Japanese, my father and my mother used to tell me, “*Chotto enryoshita hō ga ii.*” To kind of hold back.

TC: What does that mean?

MK: Show some restraint.

GA: Yeah. Right.

TC: Wait wait wait. Michi mentioned she knows what you mean but I don't know what you mean.

- GA: *Enryo* means to kind of hold back. To exercise some restraint.
- TC: That is to exercise restraint on what?
- GA: So that you don't come out as a Japanese. Making people feel that maybe see the Japanese guy pushing something or trying to do something. I think many Japanese felt like that during the war period. To exercise restraint so that people will not feel that they're trying to—not take over but—trying to do things that they maybe better off if they didn't try to do.
- MK: So during the war, in what kind of situations would your mother say to *enryo*?
- GA: Personally, I don't think she was talking about me personally. But I think there was a feeling that to *enryo* becomes very important so that people don't get the wrong impression and be critical for the wrong reasons. She was not concerned about me doing personally anything because I don't think she worried about me doing something that might bring about some concerns.
- TC: Did you know any Japanese older people or people your age who made you feel that they were over maybe on the edge of pushing themselves too much? Pushing the potential power of Japanese?
- GA: No because I think the Japanese—my mother's generation, my parents' generation—I think they were very reserved and they did not try to exert themselves. They lived day to day, they earned money, made a living. That's what they've tried to do. They never tried to push themselves in any ways that would raise any kind of concern.
- TC: Did the issue of racial superiority or racial inferiority in this. . . . I grew up in black/white, yeah? Underlying the white-black relationship was that whites were racially superior. That's why we have all this privilege. Blacks are inferior. That is why their status is low. That is the brutal reality of the American context. Did you have whiffs of that as a child? Whiffs of the issue of superiority and inferiority? If so, who was superior in the story?
- GA: No, I don't recall. For one thing I never met a black person in Hawai'i. The first time I met a black person was when I went away to school. So the black-white issue was not a matter of concern to me. It became later on when I began to feel that there was—not discrimination as such but—a feeling of some part superiority and inferiority. I think I began to sense some of that later on, but not when I was in high school.
- TC: You didn't have any sense of this being an issue for people in Hawai'i at that time?
- GA: No.
- TC: So you had this sense of all the people from the different racial groups being of equal. . . .
- GA: We all got along together. Any differences was not because of racial thing. But very personal.

- MK: How about in the Japanese community? Sometimes there were some sense of superiority or inferiority among the different *kenjin*—people who came from different *ken*. What was your sense of it?
- GA: I think there was that kind against Okinawan people for example. You know the *Naichi* and Okinawans. There was some feeling that the Okinawans were inferior.
- MK: During your childhood and youth, how much of that were you exposed to?
- GA: You know very little because I had. . . . The boy, Shimabuku was one of my good friends. We played together.
- MK: Okinawan?
- GA: Okinawan, uh-huh. If I think back now during my childhood days and my days in McKinley, I did not feel there was any category of people—whatever the categories may be—that was superior and inferior.
- TC: Filipinos weren't looked down on?
- GA: No. Not during my high school years. I think when I got into politics I began to see the Filipinos as being the last group of immigrants to come here and being less educated and it was not until the new immigrants from Philippines started to come that you had more professional people but until then, Filipinos generally toiled as laborers. They were not businesspeople. They were not professional people.
- WN: I think not being from the plantation might have—you sort of came up with this attitude of more egalitarian background. Whereas maybe a plantation it's really pronounced because you have Japanese, Filipinos . . .
- GA: Oh they had that. I didn't know that.
- WN: They had Japanese Camp and Filipino Camp and so forth. And then the Haole Camp which is mostly on the hill. Anyway, I was just wondering if you had any classmates at McKinley who came off from the plantations who maybe had a different view of racial relations.
- GA: At that time I didn't know anybody—not a single person—who had lived on plantation and had that plantation life. All these prejudiced things I started to hear in 1954 when I ran for office. And all talking about all the bad things that happened to them. Now Dan Inouye was not a plantation child either. Spark Matsunaga was [on] Kaua'i.
- Both Dan and Spark expressed the thought to me when I first went to see them—let them know that I was going to run for lieutenant governor. The thought being expressed, “We have so many Japanese,” yeah.
- MK: In that case it was a more an issue of politics not an exercise of *enryo*.

GA: No. More politics. The concern that there might be political reaction because you have too many Japanese names up there. That's what Jack Burns wanted me to know that even amongst my own people there would be some concerns about the ethnic imbalance.

TC: We're really taking a jump forward in violating Michi's attachment to chronology, but forgive me.

MK: That's okay.

TC: Because of the weird dynamics of the lieutenant governor, who jumps in to run for lieutenant governor. You not only get the Democratic nomination for governor—we have to go back. You know how you got the Democratic nomination for governor but then Nelson Doi is your running mate right? In 1974?

GA: [Nineteen] seventy-four.

TC: So you have Japanese candidate, Japanese candidate. Sparky had gone up was a senator and. . . .

GA: Sparky was a US Representative at that time.

TC: A representative.

GA: And we had Hiram Fong.

TC: Hiram Fong on the other side. Hiram Fong was at the end of his last term or something like that.

GA: Right, right.

TC: It didn't seem to be a problem. It's like people would. . . .

GA: It didn't come out to be a problem. Almost like telling me maybe you should *enryo*.

TC: Politically it didn't seem to be a problem though.

GA: Yeah.

TC: It's just like it was a phase—a happenstance.

GA: I think it's more a question from Dan and Spark's point of view, "What's going to happen if another Japanese begins to run?" Too many people say too many Japanese. And concern about how it might affect them politically also.

See I wanted Dan Akaka for my running mate. It didn't work out that way.

WN: This was in [19]74?

GA: [Nineteen] seventy-four.

WN: Well, you know we were talking about your mother and saying that you need to *enryo* and so forth. I was wondering did she have any thoughts about you going to these Emergency Service Committee meetings because it seems to me that sort of goes against this holding back, you know these . . .

GA: No, I think she was happy that I was going. That I was learning. It's broadened my own experience—my thinking. She thought it was very good for me to be at a meeting where we talk about Japanese future in Hawai'i.

WN: I know that during the war Japanese couldn't really—large numbers couldn't congregate during the war. I was just wondering was that the case with Emergency Services? Was it like a covert kind of meeting?

GA: I never knew there was that kind of restriction.

WN: Was there?

TC: I don't think it was that and also Nu'uano Y was kind of a neutral—it was like the government. . . . It was like going to a government building.

WN: Because when my grandmother died I remember my mother saying they couldn't have a large funeral because it was during the war, so they only had just the family there because they said the government said they couldn't have a large number of Japanese congregating.

TC: That was more of an earlier part of the war probably.

GA: Oh really. Ah.

WN: This was in [19]43.

TC: [Nineteen] forty-three yeah.

WN: I was just wondering if it was some kind of covert meeting or anything like that.

GA: No.

TC: I wonder like these Emergency Service Committee meetings you had this perception of Shigeo Yoshida as being this very respected, for you, figure. Did you look at them generally as the leadership of the Japanese community?

GA: Yes I did.

TC: So it was like a gathering of very respected figures.

GA: Yes. We were gathering to talk about what we needed to know and do in order that the Japanese future would be better in Hawai'i.

WN: Do you remember things like did you introduce yourself or did you have nametags or anything like that?

- GA: No, I don't remember name tags. But I knew that there were people who knew of me—who I was. Stanley Miyamoto. Shigeo Yoshida. Mitsu[yuki] Kido. I didn't know him then.
- TC: I put myself in your shoes. You talk about you didn't talk, you listened. Pretty awe-inspiring I think.
- GA: Yeah. There were people I kind of placed on a pedestal. It was nice to hear them talk about our future in Hawai'i and for them to have this kind of expression of why people I thought were very very outstanding, good people in our community.
- MK: But at that time did you feel like the future of Japanese Americans was something you should be worried about as the war was ending?
- GA: Mm-hmm. I think that awareness came as I attended the meetings and people talked about what could be the consequence if they were not careful.
- TC: To me this reflected an extraordinary farsightedness on the part of the people who were framing this. It's very farsighted.
- GA: Right that group was a group—and it was before my time—but I think that group more than any other group helped to make it possible for the 442[nd] and the MIS—the volunteers.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 59-17-4-12 and 59-18-4-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

May 15, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

WN: We'll start right now. This is session number four with Governor George R. Ariyoshi on May 15, 2012. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto, Michi Kodama-Nishimoto, and Tom Coffman as well. So, let's continue.

MK: You know, yesterday we had the pleasure of meeting Betty [Nojima, GA's sister]. During that interview, Betty told us about one of your father's early businesses. It involved puffing rice. Can you please talk about that?

GA: My father used to go around and he would get people to bring out a bowl of [raw] rice and put that bowl of rice in this machine that he had. It would take about fifteen minutes. It was like a burner on the bottom, and he would crank it for fifteen minutes and that thing would keep on turning. At the end of that fifteen- or twenty-minute period, he would put a huge screen bag he created—about a foot in diameter, maybe about three feet or three and a half feet long. He would open it, and it was heavy to open because air compressed it. When you opened it, it would come out with a real boom. The top rice that was in there would come out as puffed rice. Almost filled that one foot by three and a half to four feet thing with the puffed rice. Maybe up to about three feet, two and a half feet. The volume must have increased about ten[fold], fifteenfold. My mother taught them how to take the puffed rice and make like a puffed rice candy.

MK: How did she make that puffed rice candy?

GA: My best recollection is that she took mayonnaise and sugar, and let the sugar melt into the mayonnaise. When it melted, she took it out. I tried it once and I left it on the fire and it all burned up, but I remember now my mother taking it off and then putting the puffed rice in there, and mixing it so they kind of get sugary and sticky. Then she would put in the pan and kind of press it down, and cut it when it was dry.

WN: So the mayonnaise would sort of keep it stuck together?

GA: The taste, yeah. The taste, and making the sugar melt. At one time I thought it was butter but when I think about it, I think it was mayonnaise.

MK: How much did your father charge for that big amount of puffed rice?

GA: I don't recall. Maybe ten cents or fifteen cents.

WN: But it was their own rice. They brought their own rice out.

GA: They brought the rice, yeah.

WN: And it was a bowl of raw rice.

GA: Yes.

WN: I see. So it was more like a service that your father provided.

GA: That's right.

MK: Where would he go to provide this rice puffing service?

GA: He went around Pālama. I remember one time his having to carry it when they had a flood at Nu'uanu Valley. So I think he was on the other side, maybe Vineyard, Kukui area. Down at Kalihi, Pālama.

MK: When we were talking about this earlier, you said that you remembered some other stuff that your father did.

GA: Yes. It was not a regular thing, but at the *matsuri*—that's Japanese functions when people get together—he used to make ice cake. Not the normal ice cake, but very tasty. I don't know how he made that—what he put in there. It was creamy. He'd put it in a container and that container came in all kinds of shape: pear, peach, apple, banana. He would put the juice contents in there and put it in this cooler. I'm not sure how. When I think back now, it must have been ice and Hawaiian salt to make it cold. Get it frozen, put it in there and he rotated it. Turned it. The liquid became like ice cake, only when you took it out it was the shape of whatever the container it came out of. If it was a banana container, it came out like a banana. If it was a peach, that's what it came out like.

WN: Was there a stick in it?

GA: No.

MK: This he did at *o-matsuris* or festivals?

GA: Right. And, at the *o-matsuri*, *tokoroten*.

MK: Oh? He made that kind of gelatin-like Japanese confection?

GA: Right, right. Yeah. That's right. The *tokoroten*. If you go to Japan today, and if you go down around where they have festivals, and you go down to the place where they have Japanese food being served—the stands—you will find sometimes *ningyo manjū*. It's various kinds of shapes of things. They pour the *manjū* base in there, and then they unlock, put sugar and pour a little bit more on that thing and then they close it and they put it in the fire. That will kind of expand it a bit, even though everything was on one side, it expands and it will fill. So when you open it, it becomes like a boy, human being,

person. That's what it comes out looking like, shaped like that. If it's a banana, that's what it is. I think I have that at home now. I think I remember seeing it not too long ago in the garage.

MK: The mold for the *ningyo manjū*?

GA: Right.

WN: He would put it over his fire?

GA: Charcoal fire.

MK: Was that just to make at home for you folks, or . . .

GA: No. (Pause) I'm not sure what kind of function, but whenever Japanese people gathered that was one of the things he did. I don't think it was together with the ice cake thing.

MK: You mentioned that he did that when the Japanese people gathered. In those days, on what occasions would the Japanese community members get together?

GA: Well, for one thing, when the *kaigun*—Japanese navy group—came through. Boys' Day. Girls' Day. When they had sumo. (Pause)

TC: So one of the events was when the Japanese training ships were here?

GA: One of the events, yes. Because they had the sumo and lots of people gathered to watch the sumo. That's when he made some of these things.

TC: Would that be like right next to the ship? Is that the way it worked? Was it right next to the ship?

GA: No. It was . . .

TC: The gathering?

GA: Gatherings away from the ship. Like at the Japanese consulate, they had sumo there. At the temples, the Daijingu they had sumo.

TC: The Japanese training ship crews and officers would be there?

GA: Well, it was a contest between local sumo wrestlers and the Japanese naval people. That's a contest that they had, sumo. Local against them.

TC: I listen to this story and I marvel further that your dad didn't get picked up in the internment.

(Laughter)

WN: I'm just thinking the same thing.

- TC: That was something that was held in great suspicion, and I think that your story is a wonderful telling of the story from inside out, because it illustrates how naturally that it occurred and how farfetched the suspicions of it were. So I really appreciate you sharing that.
- GA: My father, if he had been caught earlier, maybe there would have not been a George Ariyoshi. (Laughs)
- TC: Also (chuckles), I've lost my train of thought. Well, the other aspect is, I knew way back when your dad was well known to a certain group of people. The more I listen about your dad, the more I think how many hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people knew him. Or thousands of people. He was very well known.
- GA: Sumo in those days was very, very popular.
- MK: Also, because your father had all these different businesses that would take him in the community, I wonder to what extent did that kind of kick in later on when you entered politics.
- GA: I think—everybody knew him. Not just Ariyoshi, but as “Yahatayama.” They used to call him, “Yahata.” Everything that he did, everybody called him, “Yahata.” (Chuckles)
- MK: You know in yesterday's interview, your sister mentioned your mother used to make the thousand-stitch belts, the *senninbari*, for visiting *kaigun*. What do you remember about that?
- GA: I remember my mother and Mrs. Yoshimori getting together and making—I don't know what to call that. . . .
- MK: Thousand-stitch belt?
- TC: The Japanese word is *sen, sen*. . . .
- GA: *Sen*-something, yeah.
- MK: *Senninbari*.
- GA: I don't remember the details of it, but I knew that Mrs. Yoshimori and my mother sometimes worked together with making that.
- MK: In those days, were you aware of even the Japanese army and navy and what they were involved in during the 1930s?
- GA: No, not really. But I knew that one of my uncles was in Manchuria, with the Japanese army.
- WN: This is your father's brother?
- GA: My father's brother.

WN: Do you remember your father saying anything about that?

GA: No.

MK: In those days, how much contact did the Ariyoshi family over here have with family in Japan?

GA: I think very little, because after my father left, I don't think he ever met his father again. Everything was by letter correspondence. No more telephone back in those days. (Laughs) So when my father—I came home one day and my mother told me that Grandpa had passed way. When I found that out, when I was told that, it was way, way after the death took place. Because of the ancient communication system.

Now, that brother who was in the army, he came to Hawai'i when I was still governor. He visited and he spent a night at Washington Place. He was just overjoyed. It was all he talked about. "*Chiji no ie ni tomarimasu.*" He slept overnight at the home, at Washington Place. I met him for the first time when I went to Japan in 1965. I was going to meet him at Beppu at the hotel, but he found out that I was coming to Beppu on a ship from Honshu. So when ship docked over there, I saw this man walking toward the ship. I looked at him and immediately I said, "That's my uncle!" I didn't know I was going to meet him there, but when I saw him—I had not seen pictures of him either so I didn't know what he looked like, but he reminded me of my father.

MK: The resemblance was that strong?

GA: Yeah.

TC: When you received word, or when your mother said that your grandfather had died, did your father have any reaction to that? Or did he say anything to you?

GA: No, everything was very quiet. Nobody said very much, and everything was very quiet. My father had been telling me—I knew that my grandpa was very strong and he was a very big man. He was six foot three [inches], in Japan. Six [foot] three [inches] at that time in Japan, he was really a giant. He must have stood a good one foot above everybody else. My father told me that he was very strong, and that he liked sake.

(Laughter)

TC: Was he a farmer?

GA: Yeah.

TC: He was a farmer?

GA: Yes. Farmer. My father had to go to Japan after 1952 when he got his permanent residence, three or four years later, he went to Japan. He had to, as the oldest son, settle certain kind of problems. Number one, he wanted to rebuild the family grave. I visited what they had built, and they showed me what was there before. Small stones about a foot high, inscribed with Ariyoshi family. My father went there and built a nice family grave.

The other thing my father had to go to settle was the property that was owned by his father and mother. Because he was the oldest in the family, the property was his if he wanted it. But he didn't want it. He felt that those that remained there should have the property and enjoy. This is big farmland. When I went to Japan and they took me to the grave, I was amazed at the size of land that they were farming. My father had decided that property should go to the youngest brother, because the next brother to him was in the contracting business and was doing okay. So he felt that his youngest one should have it so he can farm and survive. So those two things he felt he had to do when he went to Japan. That's what he accomplished.

TC: When you received word that your grandfather had died, you're not knowing him but you did have a mental image of him from your father's descriptions. Did you have any sense of—at that point if you didn't know him. . . . I remember burying and losing both of my grandfathers who I knew, you know. How did that work for you?

GA: Well, I felt a certain sadness, but I was not that affected, because we had little contact. It was only knowing that he was my grandfather and that he was big person. He was very strong, and he liked sake (chuckles).

MK: Now that I've heard that your father was the *chōnan*—oldest son—and the family had farmlands of their own, how come he left? How come he became a seaman and left?

GA: I think that being a farmer in those days did not mean that you were doing well. You get enough to eat, maybe. Farming was very different also. I guess it was an opportunity for him to have a new endeavor. Do something to make a living.

MK: From your side, had you ever heard of his family's feelings about his leaving as a seaman?

GA: No. In 1975, when they asked me not to come to Japan until I was invited by the government, around September I went to Japan. First half was the national government taking care of me, the second half was the Japanese governors association taking care of me. That's when I went to Kumamoto and to Fukuoka. When I went to Fukuoka, I visited the elementary school that my father went to. My father only went to the third grade. So when I went to the elementary school, they had all kinds of things ready for me to look at. They showed me his grades, and his grades were really excellent. They were telling me he was a really bright, good student. Then they showed me a picture of all the students who were there, and they asked me if I could find my father. I looked. I couldn't find my father. So they put the piece of paper that they had with a hole and put it over like this. They said, "*Kore ga otōsan yo.*" I looked at it. Oh yeah, I can then see. But until they did that for me, I could not find my father in that picture.

MK: You really learned something about your father on that trip.

GA: Yeah.

MK: On that trip, you also visited Kumamoto?

GA: Yes.

MK: Anything you found out about your mother's side?

GA: Most of my mother's relatives—brothers and sisters—were gone. But she had an aunt and an uncle who were still there. I found out that my grandpa, when he lived in Hawai'i—he died here in Hawai'i. He died at age 98. I found out that his sister died at age 88, but not from natural causes. She died in a very violent fire. She was still very healthy at that time. Another sister died at 98. Then a younger brother died when he was 106 years old. So I found that family, wow. They were not all dead at that time when I went there, but later on as they began to die off. . . . And that one family, at 88, would have maybe lived much, much longer time except for that violent fire. My grandpa dying at 98 in Hawai'i. His sister dying at 98 in Japan in Kumamoto. Then her brother dying at 106, I thought this family has longevity. Maybe I have the genes also. (Chuckles)

TC: We think you're just getting started though.

(Laughter)

GA: My grandson who lived with us, *Ryo-kun*, is always telling me, "Grandpa, you have to live until after I graduate from school. That means you're going to live to over 100. When you become 100 years old," he said, "I will be 24 years old." (WN and MK laugh.)

WN: Maybe you can run for governor again.

(Laughter)

TC: I've had a couple of times where I tried to talk him into it.

MK: Well, I'm going to shift you a little bit more to a more recent time in your life. We'll move you to the wartime. Go back to your wartime. I know during the war, your family moved from the Mānoa place that you folks were in to—was it Colburn?

GA: Colburn Street.

MK: Where did you live?

GA: At 1714 Colburn Street. It was a property on which my father built the laundry. When I came back from the [military] service (pause) we already were living there, 1714 Colburn Street. When I went away to school, during that period I was away in school, my father built the laundry building right in the front. We lived in the back. Our house was in the back. When I came back, my father told me that the laundry building that he had built is for the laundry. But he built it so that it's strong enough that it can put up a second story. He said, "We can build up a second story office for your law practice." (MK and GA chuckle.) I didn't do that, but he always told me from the very beginning when I came back, he told me, "It's a place up here on the second floor we can build and we can make your office up there if you want."

WN: He bought the land?

GA: Yes. Something like—it was two properties: 1714 Colburn, 1718 Colburn. Both 5,000 square feet land area. My best recollection is that he bought it for a little over \$2,000.

MK: He bought it during wartime?

GA: No.

MK: Oh, afterwards?

GA: No. (Pause) During the war he already had it, because on December 7, when I came back I asked for my father. My father was on the Colburn Street property fixing the house. So, he owned the property at that point already.

MK: So, did you folks move to Colburn while you were still at McKinley [High School]?

GA: No.

MK: Oh, okay.

GA: At the time that we had that property, my mother had that *udon* restaurant. I went to Sunday school. My father was working on the house. When we evacuated, we evacuated to my cousin's farm in Mānoa. We were there for about a year and a half or so. Then we moved to Colburn Street. So when I got to Colburn Street, I had just gotten started my senior year at McKinley.

MK: So what was it like living on Colburn Street that year?

GA: It was different because everybody there was going to Farrington High School. My friends, a lot of my good friends, were all going to Farrington. I was going to McKinley. Some of my friends that I made like George Akita was intermediate school friends. Because of George I met a lot of other Farrington students who were living in Kalihi. One of my best friends when I was on Colburn Street he was a block and a half away. Right across the Libby [McNeill and Libby] cannery. He lived there. He and I became very close friends.

MK: How come you never transferred to Farrington?

GA: Because I got started there [McKinley High School]. I was senior class president, so it was hard for me to change. (Chuckles)

WN: How did you feel about leaving Mānoa and going back into the city?

GA: Every day we walked about a mile from the home, about maybe a third of a mile on this narrow road where one car can pass.

WN: This is Mānoa?

GA: In Mānoa. Cobblestoned center yeah? Only the side, grass in the center. About one-third of a mile we walked the distance every day. From there another two-thirds of a mile to the bus stop. So, every day, we walked one mile to go up and catch the bus, and many days it rained. We didn't walk every day, because sometimes cars passing by were very good. They always stopped if they have room to pick us up and take us down. Everybody stopped for somebody else.

WN: You always said you enjoyed your time at Mānoa.

GA: I did.

WN: And so, when you had to leave Mānoa to come to Colburn Street, did you remember feeling any kind of sadness or anything?

GA: Yes. I was kind of concerned that I was going to leave Mānoa. We used to go into the mountains. Mountain apple. All the bananas you want. Cutting plants on the mountain that they used, they sent out to the market.

Going out five-thirty in the morning to go from Mānoa on the truck down to College Walk. Back in those days, all the wholesalers were on College Walk. My cousin took bananas and *ti* leaves, and I don't know what kind of plant it was—it was very beautiful. Anyway, that's where they took it and they sold. Peddlers all came there to buy whatever they needed to do to go peddling. Owners of small shops, they came there to buy the things they needed to take to their shop to sell. So College Walk was that center.

MK: So you kind of enjoyed doing that, helping with that.

GA: I enjoyed that. Right.

WN: I wanted to ask you too. When we talked to Betty yesterday. . . . Well, when we talked to you, you said your mother buried some money for safekeeping.

GA: Yes.

WN: Then you said that you never could find it. Talking to Betty, she said they did find it.

GA: Oh? (Chuckles)

WN: Then you said something about, now that we mentioned it, you do remember something about your mother doing what she did with the money.

GA: The money was kind of raggedy. Some stuck together. I remember my mother trying to peel, but she was not successful in peeling all the money, so there was lots of money that got wasted, could not be redeemed. My mother, I remember her using the iron to press that money to straighten it out.

MK: I hope she didn't lose too much. (MK and GA laugh.)

GA: You know, in those days, the new currency that was issued said, Hawai'i. They issued that because in case invasion and something happened, the currency they could distinguish from the other currency. I had one of those Hawai'i twenty-dollar bills in my wallet for many years. I don't know what happened to that. I lost it.

MK: Another thing that your sister mentioned was that prior to the war, your mom used to keep her hair long and put it up Japanese style, and she wore kimono, not dresses. Then when the war came, she changed. What would be your recollection?

GA: I don't remember the hair changing, but I know that she stopped wearing kimono and she started to wear regular dress.

MK: From your recollection, do you remember her giving any reason for the change?

GA: No. (Pause) I guess the family did things without talking too much about it. But she must have had a reason for doing that, for not wearing kimonos anymore. If I think back now, I got to feel that she did it because she was concerned about her being criticized, being somebody that's Japanese. Maybe because she was concerned about my father. See, if she attracted that kind of attention, "Oh you're really Japanese." From there, it could have been to my father too. It could have been out of concern for how my father might have got an impact—his illegal entry.

WN: Do you remember having to get rid of any kinds of artifacts or photos or anything during the war?

GA: I don't know if they got rid of art, but I know they got rid of many, many things. I think anything that was kind of Japanese they got rid of.

MK: Your father was a *sumō-tori*. How about his *mawashi*?

GA: Ah, we still have that. We still have that, and I am thinking of what I'm going to do with it. I'm thinking about maybe donating that. My son, Donn, has gotten very much involved with the Bishop Museum—the section that has the Japanese things. I may give that *mawashi*. He had a beautiful *mawashi*.

MK: Try to explain to us what the *mawashi* is, what it looks like.

GA: If you laid the *mawashi* out, it would be about maybe two and a half feet to a yard wide. It was very nicely embroidered. My father's was golden embroidery. On the bottom it would have like ropes. Coiled ropes about that long. One next to the other, the whole width of it. It would be maybe twenty, twenty-five feet long. The reason why it was long was because you wearing it like this, but it had to coil around the body and come down beneath—the apron part yeah. Then they had to tuck it in to keep it in place. So they used that at the end of the sumo tournament and they had sumo dance. Dance around the *dōjō*. (Pause)

I still have that and I got to decide what to do with it. People from the national museum in Los Angeles has kind of hinted to me about giving it there. But I feel that I kind of want to keep it in Hawai'i because that's where my father was.

It's almost like Queen Lili'uokalani's portrait at Washington Place. When I first got to Washington Place, I saw the portrait and I saw it from one angle. The next time I came I look at it from another and she's looking at me from both angles. I thought to myself, "She was looking the other side." So I stood on one end and I looked at her. I started to walk across and as I walk across her eyes kept on turning looking at me. I was really amazed, intrigued, by her eyes.

During I think my last term, we were asked by the Friends of 'Iolani Palace group whether we could give that portrait to them and have it put up at 'Iolani Palace. Jeanie [Ariyoshi, GA's wife] did not want to do that. She refused. Her reason for refusal was, the queen was not happy. She was imprisoned at 'Iolani Palace. This was her home, and I am not going to send her out of her home, which she enjoyed very much, to 'Iolani Palace. Even though the palace is now restored—where she had very unhappy days as a prisoner there. So Jeanie refused to give it to the Friends [of 'Iolani Palace]. After we left the office, John Waihee decided to give it to the palace. But Jeanie felt that as long as we were there, she felt a responsibility to keep her there.

She went out—she restored a lot of things that belonged to her, she got back to 'Iolani Palace. She renovated, restored Washington Place to make it look really nice. There was a bed there, the queen's bed downstairs. It was a higher bed, but one of the governor's wives cut the legs to make it shorter, which meant that they also slept on that bed. Jeanie felt that nobody sits on that bed. She told our children, "Nobody gets on that bed." Nobody lies down on the bed, because that's the queen's bed and we've got to honor her legacy and we must not insult her by sleeping on that bed. When I found out about the leg posts being cut and lowered, I felt that somebody was sleeping on that bed and that's the reason they cut the leg posts down. But we treated that room where the queen's bed was with great feelings. We felt very strongly that we owed it to her, to honor her by not letting anybody sit or lie down on that bed.

MK: So it's with that kind of reverence and that kind of noting of historical significance that in your own personal relationship with your father, you would like to keep your father's *mawashi* here in the islands.

GA: Yes. That's right. I've almost made the decision. I haven't done it yet, but I want to make the decision to give it to the Bishop Museum and keep it there. Donn is working very closely with the Bishop Museum to restore many of the things that they have there, so they've asked me about my *kun'ito* also.

MK: Your?

GA: My decoration from Japan. I have received the highest Japanese award [Grand Cordon of the Sacred Treasure] that they can give. When I received the award, I had to wear tails. I got the medal and the sash that comes around. I have it all at home, and Donn is asking whether I might donate that too. I am kind of inclined to give it there. Have you seen my picture of my *kun'ito*?

MK: It's really something.

GA: I have a picture. Somebody wanted a picture of that. They wanted to do something with it, so I gave them a picture. The something that they did was bring back to me, give me, two large ceramic—I think it's ceramic. You can touch it, you can wipe it wet, whatever you want to do. But it can never be destroyed. I have it in my room, in my office there. We can take a look later on.

MK: Anyway, going back to the wartime period. You graduated from McKinley in 1944. I was wondering, what was graduation like?

- GA: Graduation, we had graduation ceremony and we had commencement speakers. I was one of the commencement speakers. But it was all done in the courtyard at McKinley High School. I forgot the name of the building that's there, but it was there that we had it. We walked around there and sat down. It was done in the morning around ten o'clock. Very plain affair. We didn't have any cap and gown or anything like that. It was everybody wearing the same color trousers and the same white shirt and the same color tie. That's how we graduated. Graduation party was in the afternoon at one o'clock, and it was at the Mormon Tabernacle on Beretania Street. We rented the auditorium and pulled the drapes to make it dark, turned on soft lights to give the appearance that we had an evening class function there. The function was from one o'clock until four-thirty, because we had an hour and a half to go home. Obey the curfew requirements.
- MK: You said that you were one of the speakers. What did you say to your classmates and families there?
- GA: I was speaker because I was senior class president. So, it was my expression of appreciation to the school, the families, the advisors who had anything to do with us, and to the students who participated in all the activities that we worked on. It was a feeling of gratitude that we were graduating, that we made it. (GA and MK laugh.)
- MK: Nowadays families come with *leis* and envelopes and everything. What was it like for you?
- GA: We had very little of that. Everybody was reminded that the war was still on and that we had to be very frugal. The ceremonies were going to be very frugal. So no expensive caps and gowns or anything like that. It was just white shirt, tie, and same color trousers.
- MK: At that time were your aspirations still the same? Going to be a lawyer?
- GA: Very much so. I was one step closer. (Chuckles)
- MK: If you looked around you and you talked to your classmates, what were they planning to do?
- GA: With a few exceptions—I was one of about seven or eight students in Franklin Hluboky's trigonometry class. Those people there, most of them, were talking about becoming engineers. Including one girl there. I remember her name was Audrey. I forgot her last name. Japanese girl. She was one of the few girls talking about becoming an engineer at that time. Aside from those seven people, I think most people had no idea about what they wanted to become. Roy Hirakawa became an eye doctor, but he never talked to me. We never talked about becoming an optometrist. My secretary, Vivian Harada—we all talked about going to college, university [i.e., University of Hawai'i]. But we never talked about what we were going to become and what our aim was as far as location was concerned.
- MK: When you say that all of us talked about going to college, who is that "all of us"?

GA: It was a group that I ran around with. Senior class officers, friends that we went to dances with from time to time. Almost everybody who ran around with us did things together. We all talked about going to university.

TC: If you think back, Governor, about people who were in this group—which I think is very interesting—to what extent do you think they were people who were the solid geometry students of the math teacher?

GA: Most of them were not. I think that solid geometry group were all going to college, but they had their own group.

TC: To what extent do you think that the YMCA [Young Men’s Christian Association] reference defined this group? Defined the group you ran around with.

GA: I think that Hi-Y group had great influence on the people. (Pause) We also had MCC.

MK: McKinley Citizenship Club?

GA: Yeah. That was the service club. I think we had over fifty members. Mostly seniors, a few juniors. Mostly seniors. I think most of the MCC students went on to university.

MK: Back in those days, getting into the MCC was pretty hard huh?

GA: Yeah. You were selected.

MK: What were the qualifications?

GA: I don’t think there were any qualifications, requirements as such. But I think the members selected people who they thought were good students, who would provide good service. So it was a selection by the outgoing seniors of juniors coming into the organization.

TC: Did you have a service project that was tied in with the MCC? Or was it merely your role as a student, but do you remember your service projects at all?

GA: We did many things. That entertainer program that we talked about, it was our way of trying to provide. . . . You know, back in those days, not too many things you can do for entertainment. So we tried to provide two or three programs during the year and bring in USO [United Service Organizations] performers. Have a lunch hour program where all of the students could be entertained. That was an MCC project and I was very much involved in that project. We also provided (pause) not patrol, what the JPOs [Junior Police Officers] used to do. We kind of provided that kind of help after school. Help the students get across the street, asking them to be careful, wait until it’s clear. We acted as ushers in many things, and we talked about—I remember one very specific thing—our lawn. People used to walk across, cut the corners you know? That area turning brown, so one of the projects for MCC was let’s keep the students off that part of the lawn. Make them walk across other parts, but not everybody walking just across by the corner. Everything turning brown. So we kind of patrolled and helped try to get people not to walk on the grass.

MK: When you were at Central [Intermediate School], I know you had student court. How about at McKinley?

GA: I don't recall a student court at McKinley. Why would they have one in Central and not in McKinley?

(Laughter)

MK: Another thing I've heard about McKinley during the war years is that you folks raised tremendous amounts of money. Tell us about that.

GA: I got a call not too long ago—several years ago. Somebody wanted to interview me because they felt I was a person who raised lots of monies, war bonds. That person mentioned that we had raised enough of money in war bonds to buy an airplane. I did not want to be interviewed because I told him I was not the one that did it. But, I was very much involved in encouraging the purchase of bonds. The students at McKinley raised—I don't know how much—but raised a lot of money selling war bonds.

MK: At that time, what were your feelings about the buying of war bonds, being involved in efforts supportive of the U.S. war effort?

GA: I think we looked at it generally as our war efforts, our efforts to help our country. We couldn't go to war ourselves, so it was our way to help. It's also we are told, it's a good investment too. You put in I think it was six or seven dollars, and ten years later you get ten dollars. (Chuckles) I know, \$18.75 and you get back \$25.00.

WN: You remember that? (Laughs)

GA: Yeah, \$18.75 and you get back \$25.00.

MK: Now that we've gotten into the subject of money, when you studied at UH [University of Hawai'i], how did you support yourself? Tuition or whatever costs for that time you were at UH.

GA: Tuition was very, very nominal. Almost nothing, because when I went to Michigan State. . . . The tuition at [University of] Michigan when I went to law school was under \$500 for the whole year. Not just the semester, but for the whole year. The total cost of our books—we had to buy a lot of books at law school—was under \$500. My GI Bill [of Rights] covered all of that.

MK: But when you went to UH, first year, how did you manage?

GA: The tuition was almost nothing. It was so cheap, it was almost nothing. (Pause) I had summer jobs. I worked at the cannery. We saved some of those monies. I wonder what kind of work I did when I was a student. I don't recall working at the university.

MK: I didn't ask you this before, but were you the first in your family to go to college?

GA: Yes. My parents provided all of my personal needs. Clothes. Food. Shelter. So there was nothing for me to do except study. They wanted me to study. Tuition was almost like nothing. They gave me *kozukai*. *Kozukai* means little spending monies—allowance.

MK: How did you fare at UH, the first year? Your academics.

GA: I was an average student. Maybe about three points.

MK: Did you find anything particularly interesting?

GA: I was very interested in our history. History 100. I didn't like chemistry.

(Laughter)

WN: Was chemistry required?

GA: Yeah.

WN: First year?

GA: First year. One semester only. I was happy to get out of chemistry. (Chuckles)

TC: What did History 100 cover, roughly? Was it Hawai'i history? Was it Western history or Pacific or what?

GA: It was a world history.

TC: Who taught it? Do you remember?

GA: I don't remember the name. I only remember the name of the chemistry teacher, [Lenore] Bilger, because she was—we hated her. (Chuckles) I don't remember the name of my history professor.

TC: Chemistry professors are tyrants by nature.

(Laughter)

WN: We're going to change tapes right here.

END OF TAPE NO. 59-17-4-12

TAPE NO. 59-18-4-12

GA: We have a *butsudan* at home, and every day I *tateru senkō* for my parents. When I *tateru* the *senkō*, I tell them, "Oh, getting close but not yet." (WN laughs.)

MK: Maybe you can, for Tom's benefit, talk about that. Putting on the *senkō*, the *butsudan*.

WN: We're rolling.

GA: I have an altar at home with pictures of my mother and my father there. Every day, I light two—what is *senkō*?

MK and WN: Incense.

GA: Incense, yeah. I put it up there.

TC: Every day.

GA: Yeah, every day. I do it twice a day. More recently I have been telling them—I talk to them—I tell them, “Oh, pretty soon, but not yet.” (Laughs)

TC: Very interesting.

MK: So even when you were growing up, did your mother and father have a *butsudan*?

GA: We always had a *butsudan*. When I pass on, I think I want to send the *butsudan* to Hongwanji and ask them to dispose of it. Disposing of it means burning them, because I think it is too much of a burden for my children to have to look after the *butsudan*. They may not look after it. They may not *tateru senkō* every day. I think if that's going to happen then better for the *butsudan* to be disposed at the Hongwanji. They have a disposal system to burn that.

MK: I think many local families have to come to decisions about things like the *butsudan*, yeah?

GA: You know, it's one thing to want to keep it, but if you're going to keep it and not maintain it properly, then better I think to dispose of it properly.

TC: In addition to your daily observance, how do you maintain it otherwise in terms of keep it in good condition, clean, et cetera?

GA: Every once in a while we clean. Wipe the whole thing down. At one time, we used to put fruit or whatever. When my mother was alive, every time, the first scoop of rice goes. Give it to them. But we don't do that anymore, because my mother told me that when you do that you're not supposed to throw it away. You put the rice out and you're supposed to eat it. For us, we forget. We don't want to eat the rice, one day old. We give fruit, so we peel that and let it stay there for a while. So we decided not to do that anymore. Once in a while on special occasions we would do that and give an offering of food and sake, because my father liked sake also. But we don't do it on a regular basis.

MK: I know some families do a daily offering of water or *o-cha*.

GA: No, we don't do that, again because my mother felt that once you offer you're not supposed to take it and throw away. You got to eat it or drink it. I didn't want to eat one-day-old rice. (Chuckles)

TC: This is the Buddhist practice, right? The *butsudan*. I saw this interesting documentary film at a film festival about the temples of Hawai‘i. I thought of you when I saw this film, because they said something like the Shinto temple was for occasional ritual and the Buddhist practice was really for organizing, guidance, and principles and spiritual enrichment. I wonder if you agree with that first of all.

GA: My parents had two. They had a *butsudan* and they had a shelf and they put. . . . That was *hotoke-sama*?

WN: No, *kami-sama*.

GA: *Kami-sama*, yeah.

WN: So *kami-sama* was the Shinto. *Hotoke-sama* is . . .

TC: I don’t know what this is. What is it?

WN: Let me just explain. My family, we had two altars. We had the Buddhist altar we called *hotoke-sama*, which we did the same thing you did with giving the rice.

GA: *Hotoke-sama* is when a person dies, they become *hotoke* yeah?

WN: Something like that.

MK: Yes.

WN: That’s the Buddhist. And then we had a Shinto shrine called the *kamidana*, which was a different looking kind of altar.

GA: Not as fancy as the *butsudan* yeah?

WN: Right. Kind of plain.

MK: Very austere.

WN: We had the same thing, first scoop of rice and so forth and so on. My understanding was because Shinto is the national religion of Japan, in essence all Japanese are Shinto because it’s uniquely Japanese. But not all Japanese are Buddhist. So we had two. I was just going to ask you if you folks had *kamidana* too.

MK: So you had a *kamidana* too in your house?

GA: Yes. We don’t now, but when my parents were alive we did.

TC: What happened to it? What did you do with it when your parents died?

GA: I don’t know.

MK: Sometimes the *kamidana* was actually built into the home. Just a shelf.

GA: Yes, just a shelf.

MK: There's a little round mirror and some other . . .

WN: A fox.

MK: . . . objects. *Inari*. Fox.

TC: What did you think the significance of the *kamidana* was as opposed to the *butsudan*?

GA: I don't know, because I was more. . . . The *butsudan* I maintained. I think my mother did the *kamidana*.

MK: I know that in some Japanese homes we go and get our *o-mamori* every year. Then we put above our entrances the piece of paper. How about in your home?

GA: We have that at home right now.

MK: You do? You follow a lot of traditions then.

GA: Yeah. The *o-mamori* sometimes people give me, more of safety or various kind of things. Sometimes I don't know what to do with it. If I put it away some place, I feel as though I'm just locking it up. (WN laughs.)

TC: What is *o-mamori*?

GA: You go to *o-tera* or shrine someplace, you can always buy—what is *o-mamori* in. . . .

MK: Amulet.

WN: You put in the car, it has safety while driving.

GA: All kind of reasons. Safety, health, whatever.

WN: Entrance to your home.

TC: So, it's like this.

MK: I'll show you one.

WN: I'll show you one. It's in our car, in fact.

MK: I have one in my purse.

GA: You carry it around?

MK: I'm carrying.

GA: See, that's the problem that I have. I feel as though I should carry it around, but I don't really carry it around because it's kind of thick.

TC: We have two in our kitchen actually. Interestingly. The other practice which I think is Japanese is, Japanese New Year's we always put up a pine bamboo.

GA: *Kadomatsu* and *mochi*? Then the pine by the entry. Pine and bamboo.

MK: So you've always observed then, the *kadomatsu*.

GA: Yes, and more recently—not the same *kadomatsu*—but *kadomatsu* in arrangement.

WN: This is mine [*o-mamori*].

GA: Oh.

TC: It's nice. It's very nice.

WN: That's the Buddhist one. But that's the same kind of thing that's above our door, in our car.

MK: Then we also have those that's in the kind of brocade case, cloth case. That's the one that's a little bulky isn't it?

GA: Yes, right.

WN: You know, Governor, I know you're Christian now.

GA: Uh-huh [yes].

WN: When did you actually make that change and why?

GA: Well, I don't know what kind of Christian I am, but I don't go to church. But I believe in God. I think I believe in the Bible and Christ. But I think—I don't want to classify myself.

TC: How did you integrate this story of Christ? It's a really big narrative. It's a narrative that often overwhelms people, rather than integrate. You know what I mean?

GA: When I went to Michigan State [University], there was a student there and his name Dan Kong. He became pastor at the Olivet Baptist Church here. Dan was at that time always talking to me about Christ. He took me down to Georgetown and there was a young person there at Georgetown who was a student. His picture came out in the paper. Older person. He was very much against the same-sex marriage. About the time President Obama said he would be in favor, he took a position very strongly against. I'm trying to think of his name. I met him when I went to Georgetown with Dan Kong.

TC: This was way back when you were a student?

GA: Yeah, when I was a student.

TC: So this guy has been around a long time.

GA: When I came back I used to go to the—[tape inaudible] with the Nu‘uanu Baptist Church. The thing that turned me off about that church however, was not a religious thing. But non-religious things were very strict. For example, after Nu‘uanu services, somebody had ‘ukulele and was playing with ‘ukulele. The pastor came and admonished him and told him this was a very sacred hall and you must not do something like that. He really turned me off, because to me playing ‘ukulele was a good thing. It was not like playing something rough or bad or gambling or something like that. So it was music and it was admonished. After a while I started to drift away from the church. I didn’t like some of the things that they were saying and doing. It was a southern Baptist group, which is the most strictly Christian group of them.

TC: What period of your life was that sort of time?

GA: (Pause) I went to Michigan State in 1947, from 1947. I came home in February of 1949. I was home until I went back to law school in fall of ‘49. So it was during up until that fall of ‘49 period.

TC: So it was like a two- or three-year period?

GA: Yes.

TC: Since then you haven’t gone to church?

GA: I have. But I’m not a regular churchgoer. When I was governor it was hard for me to go to church. See, Jack Burns, he went to mass every morning and he was recognized of being that. For me, going to church and becoming very public and everybody talking to me about going to church, I felt that it created some problems for me. So for me, going to church created a problem. I don’t remember the name of the person—he was very active in the church, I think St. Andrews. So he told me that he could arrange for me to have occasional church services myself at St. Andrews. So I did that for a while, because when I went to church I had so many people coming to me about me being there. I felt embarrassed. I felt embarrassed about being recognized. I was not a weekly churchgoer, you know? So it became hard for me to go to church.

TC: I understand that.

GA: Jack Burns went to mass, so everybody acknowledged that he did that. If I were a regular churchgoer maybe I would not have felt too bad. But not having been a regular, weekly churchgoer, to be acknowledged and recognized I felt really embarrassed.

MK: I think too among many Japanese, it is okay to be Buddhist and to be Shinto at the same time. To go to *Konpira-san* or to even go to Christian church. It’s kind of different for Japanese.

GA: That’s right. I think it was teaching that was important. The teaching that was important. The Buddhists get lots of teachings about how you behave, what you have to do, what you must not do. Those teachings are very important. I think the importance for Japanese, especially made the country what it is and made the country get through very difficult periods.

- MK: I think with like Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, it's kind of different from Western ones in the sense that we're not required to go every Sunday.
- GA: That's right. Yeah.
- MK: You go for certain life events. You get married in a Shinto shrine, you go to funerals in a Buddhist temple, you go to *O-bon*, but the *bon-san* will never tell me, "Oh Michiko, you have to come every Sunday." It's different.
- TC: I think it's a very interesting discussion. From my point of view, Christianity is always presented as the one true religion. The truth. The absolute. The commandments written in stone by fire, by the hand of God. This type of thing. It doesn't leave room, in most interpretations at any rate, for a kind of cultural integration or whatever. Your struggling with this, I think, is very interesting. I think about two things when I listen to this. I'm sorry that I digress so much. One of them is that I was for quite a few years active in Church of the Crossroads, which was founded by mostly older nisei, much older than you. [Shigeo] Yoshida was one. And by older Chinese Americans, and then by progressive Caucasians. We would have on Sunday morning these round circle discussions. They would talk about their synthesizing all of this. It was a lot of work, because they had converted to Christianity and then they continued to be interested in Buddhism, actually. It was compelling, I think.
- WN: I think [words inaudible] a lot of those Church of the Crossroads nisei had *butsudans* in their house. (WN and GA laugh.) Almost like in honor of their parents. And the fact that Buddhism is more like a philosophy than a metaphysical religion.
- GA: That's right.
- WN: That's the appeal too, that a philosophy means that you don't have to go to church every Sunday. You don't have to pray to Buddha. It's just a way to live, like compassion. It's sort of a basic, simple philosophy that is appealing to many people. That's how I see it. So it's okay to be Buddhist in a sense that you're honoring your parents, to have these basic philosophies and values, yet at the same time be a Christian. That's the way I see it. (Laughs)
- GA: I think that's on the Buddhist side. But from Christian side they may not look at it like that.
- MK: But it's interesting, during your lifetime you're seeing all of these changes in how we view religion. How we practice. What rituals we continue, and what we're going to hand down to our kids. You've been thinking about how. You've already kind of thought it out, what you're going to do with the *butsudan*.
- TC: Yesterday, Betty said that it sounded like about the time you went away to college that your parents transitioned to a sort of a neighborhood group which would gather people together and talk about family values and practices, but a spiritual overtone for that. Did you catch any of that as you're late in high school, or was that something that just occurred after you were gone? Did you know about it even?

GA: No, I think that didn't occur to me in high school, because in high school I was kind of busy. I had limited time because of curfew and meeting with the family. We played a lot of Chinese checkers. (Chuckles) Chinese checkers and trumps. And chess. I was really good at checkers. Before the war I used to go down to Children's Park and there was a person in charge of the park and he would bet on me and tell me to go play with other people. I could play checkers, and after the game was over I could retrace every step my opponent took and I took to get us back to where we were.

WN: This is regular checkers?

GA: Regular checkers. So I enjoyed playing checkers. We played a lot of checkers. We played a lot of Chinese checkers.

MK: How about *hanafuda*?

GA: *Hanafuda*, we played some during that time. But I played *hanafuda* after I came back from law school, Jean and I. (Laughs) We had a group that played *hanafuda*.

MK: I may be jumping forward, but when you were in high school, wartime, how about poker?

GA: I've never played poker. To this date I don't know how to play poker.

MK: How about craps? Gambling craps?

GA: I know the simple one, but when I was at one of the governor's meetings in Atlantic City, we had security assigned to us. Security assigned to me told me after three or four days, they said, "Governor, you don't have any time to relax. You have not been to the casino."

I told him, "No, I have not been."

He tell me, "Tonight, we should go. Okay?" So we went to the casino. We walked in and he told me, "You know how to play craps?"

I said, "Yeah. Seven, eleven, you win."

He said, "It's more than that." So he tried to explain to me. He said, "We'll try." We went to the table and he said, "What do you want to bet?"

I said, "I don't know."

He tell me, "Ten dollars okay?"

I tell him, "Okay." So I put down ten dollars and then he gave me the dice and I rolled it.

He tell me, "Back it up." I didn't know what it meant. So he told me what to do. I won, and he told me, "Leave everything there." I won several times. Then he told me, "Pick up half of it." I took about half of it. Then he told me, "Now, pick it all up." So I pick all of it up. He told me, "You were there only fifteen minutes and you started off with a ten dollar bet. You have \$500 now. The most important part of this game is knowing when to

quit. You could have stayed there for some more and you could have lost everything you gained.” So, that’s my craps experience.

(Laughter)

WN: So you kept [\$]500. You didn’t go on.

GA: I gave \$250 to Jeanie so she could gamble. She loves craps. She loves to play. I go to Las Vegas now, and sometimes we go there because we have corporate business meetings. I get there the day before the meeting. That night we have dinner. We have meetings, and after I’m coming out. When I go with my family, I tell me kids, “You folks go gamble. I’ll babysit.” So I take care of all the grandchildren.

TC: Why do you think you avoid gambling?

GA: Because, I feel I work hard and it’s a very sensible way for me to make money. I never have to try to gamble to make money. I’ve been lucky. I met one time with one of my clients and we were there from eleven o’clock until the next day one o’clock. During that period, that night after we finished our work and we had dinner, he said he was going to gamble a little while. He went to the blackjack table. He went there. One hundred dollar minimum. So I sat watching him for a while, and I thought I cannot do this. I got to play with him.

So I got \$1,000 and I got 10 chips. I played and I came down to my last chip and I figured one more chip and I’m all finished and I lost my 1,000. From there I started to win. My last \$100 chip I went up to \$4,400. Now, \$1,000 of my own money, \$3,000 I won and \$400 extra. So I just decided I’d take my \$1,000, I’d take my \$3,000 winnings and put \$4,000 in my pocket. Take my \$400 and play with that win or lose. I lost all of that. So I told my friend, “*Otearai chotto.*” I’m going to the little restroom. I came back and sit down. Let’s stay with him for a short while. But I walked away with \$3,000 that time.

(Laughter)

WN: Did your father gamble?

GA: Oh yeah. He used to go to Las Vegas sometimes. But my father went—and we used to talk—he goes with a limit. He wins or loses. He walks away with whatever he’s decided he’s going to lose. So, I used to talk to him about that, about his gambling. He tell me his policy, he decides he’s going to lose so much money. When he loses that he doesn’t chase, he walks away.

WN: What about when you guys were growing up, did he gamble?

GA: I don’t recall. He never gambled in our presence, but I cannot imagine the Japanese not gambling on something.

(Laughter)

WN: That’s why I asked you.

- TC: That's a very stereotypical statement there.
- GA: My father never played *hanafuda*. I think that's where the gambling came in, *hanafuda*. But I'm sure he gambled on some things, outside of our presence.
- WN: This is not gambling but it just made me think about it. Was he involved in things like *tanomoshi*?
- GA: *Tanomoshi*? Yes. I think everybody I know, the generation before mine, all took part in *tanomoshi*.
- WN: You know what *tanomoshi* is? Okay.
- TC: Well, explain it, that's good.
- GA: I think it was a way of making savings also.
- WN: Mutual financing association. A group of people together.
- TC: Who would be in your father's group? Was that how he got his businesses started?
- GA: No, I think my father's group. . . . It was more my mother's group. I don't think my father did *tanomoshi*, but my mother's side, her friends, relatives, they got together. I don't know how it really works, except I know you put in bid and the highest person has to pay back that amount. That's the interest they have to pay on monies in a few years. So if you're the first month and you bid five dollars and if it's a hundred dollars, then you owe five dollars for the next. . . . Until the end everybody gets something, yeah?
- WN: I know that if you wait, the longer you wait in that group, the better it is because you get higher interest.
- GA: Yes.
- MK: What did your mother use the *tanomoshi* funds for?
- GA: (Pause) Gee, I don't know. We talk about peddlers and Mr. Motosue had a piggery. They had dairy products also. His sons were peddlers and they used to come down to peddle food. All kinds of food. I know that my father, when he needed monies, always talked to Mr. Motosue. Mr. Motosue advanced monies to him, and he paid back on a regular [basis].
- When I got married, my father felt that we had to have a go-between person and Jeanie's family had to have a go-between person, so Mr. Motosue was our family representative. He met with Jeanie's family representative to talk about the wedding. Mr. Motosue, I think because he was selected, I think he was a very *sōdan* person—a person that my father went to talk to.
- MK: So he was a very important, respected man to your family. To ask him to be the go-between in the wedding, that's something.

GA: The person has to be substantial too. It's shame to get somebody who is a nobody. So you need somebody of some stature. Mr. Motosue was acknowledged by my parents to be a very successful businessperson, and he had his piggery. Today people might look down on a person who has a piggery, but they were not looked down upon. It was a very legitimate and nice business that they ran. They were successful.

TC: Were they Okinawan or from Japan?

GA: No.

TC: They were from Japan. The word *sōdan* is a new word here for me out of this experience. Could you explain a little more about what the word *sōdan* means?

GA: *Sōdan*, to confer. That's what it means. To confer, you talk to a person. If you have a problem you go to talk to the person about the problem and try to get their advice.

TC: It's very interesting.

WN: We were talking about gambling earlier, and I know you get drafted after one year at the university. Did you gamble while you were in basic training or in the MIS [Military Intelligence Service]?

GA: No, I didn't. When I was at Michigan State and Michigan, lots of the students gambled. A lot. (Laughs) I never gambled. I don't play poker, and I don't know how to play poker. To this day I've never played poker.

WN: I asked that question because it's sort of a stereotype of the nisei soldier that they gambled a lot. (WN and GA laugh.)

It's almost eleven-thirty.

TC: You have to walk out of the door right at eleven-thirty, Governor? We can wrap up here.

MK: Maybe we should stop here? Governor, I hope you don't mind but we'd like to continue.

GA: Yeah. I am enjoying this because I'm recollecting things I had forgotten.

MK: Good, good. We also gave you a task yeah? Go home and find the puffed rice machine. (Chuckles)

GA: Yeah, I'm going to look for the puffed rice machine. I'm going to look for the *ningyo manjū* [mold].

MK: Oh, that would be neat.

GA: I saw that recently.

MK: In your garage?

GA: Yeah. In my garage.

MK: You have to let your kids know the significance of that, otherwise they won't know that it was used long ago by your family. Wow.

GA: Oh, I'm hoping I can find. I got to check at Washington Place. I'm hoping that it's still there.

MK: Wow. I hope they find it.

GA: That and my *mochi* machine.

MK: Is still there?

GA: I got to check to see. Because we don't use the *mochi* machine now.

MK: Yeah, you have to check.

WN: Maybe before we turn it off, I remember when you were talking about your father's puffed rice machine and you said you wanted to recreate it and do it for your grandson, can you tell us a little bit about that and what happened and why you did that?

GA: My grandson had a project in school. They sell things and they keep track of the cost and what they sold for. So they keep track of whether or not they made money. My grandson decided he's going to sell lemonade and he's going to sell ice cake. You know, he made ice cake, it was really good. Ice cake, and healthy. He used soymilk. So very healthy one. He made a melon flavor and strawberry flavor and they came out really nice and tasty. But, I also wanted him to have the experience of making the puffed rice. So I want to teach him how to make them. I recall my mother's mayonnaise and my son said, "Mayonnaise? Make it with butter huh?"

I said, "No, it's mayonnaise." I tried it with mayonnaise, melting the sugar in the mayonnaise. But the mistake I made was, after it melted, I should have taken it off the stove and then mixed the puffed rice in there. But I left it on the stove and it cooked while I was mixing it. Everything turned black. (Chuckles)

Even though it turned black, my grandson wanted to taste. He said, "Grandpa, even though it's black, it tastes good." (MK and WN laugh.)

WN: You think he meant it or he was just being nice to you?

GA: I think he meant it. I think he meant it, and I got to do that with him again and do it the right way so it doesn't get burnt.

WN: We've got to find that machine of your father's so that you can show it to him.

GA: I don't know if I can make the puffed rice because it requires this big thing that you got to blow out into.

WN: Like a sack.

- TC: You know, the interviewing—I hope you’re game to go on. I sense you’re definitely game to go on actually, but I don’t want to put words in your mouth. For myself, I have to say I’ve enjoyed this so much because although I have been acquainted with you for a long time and we have worked together, I’m learning so much more because of Warren and Michi’s great expertise in exploring things that are not political per se.
- GA: You folks are making me think, and thinking about things I had forgotten about or thought were not consequential—not important.
- WN: Yeah, we specialize in things people don’t think on the surface as being important. (WN and GA laugh.) But then eventually . . .
- GA: But they’re things that happened, you know, and making me recollect things that happened.
- TC: They also become things that have historical significance, that’s what I’m hearing. I appreciate so much about what you do.
- WN: Once you’re able to connect all of these past things. You always bring up, “When I was governor. . . .” You bring it back and forth. So, there is some meaning to doing a life history kind of thing.
- GA: Yes, and the experiences that I had growing up were very important to many of the decisions that I made when I was governor. If somebody told me that, I would—how can your childhood experience affect what you did in the role as governor? But it did play a very important role. Affected my thinking.
- MK: I think for us it’s really interesting to hear the story of an urban nisei. A lot of books cover the plantation experience, but there are very few sources on urban nisei. I think it also makes a difference where you grow up and what time period you grow up. One decade later, it’s different. So that’s why this is all interesting.
- GA: It’s interesting, this discussion. The meeting I had before this was with Pono Shim. Pono is a very amazing young person. He and I were talking of values and what he’s trying to do. He’s trying to reawaken the conversation about values and the importance of values in people’s lives. That meeting today was the second meeting I had with him. We were talking about what kind of individuals, who we can get together, maybe to join us in this discussion about values and its impact. One of the names that came up was [Fujio] “Fudge” Matsuda. I looked at him and I thought, “Fudge Matsuda I’m having a meeting with him tomorrow.” He and I looked at the picture that I have of all the people who were a part of my team. Directors and deputy directors.

He pulled out certain names to me, and he told me, “What do you think of this person?” Richard Paglinawan that he pulled out.

I said, “Oh, he would be a very nice person to have. Hawaiian person with Hawaiian values and talk about how values have a great impact on what we do and how important a role it plays.” So I don’t know if I’m getting involved with something that is way above

my head, way above my capacity of my time, but I'm very interested in what Pono is talking to me about.

Do you know Richard Kosaki?

MK: Yes.

GA: Richard Kosaki and his wife Mildred, his name came up this morning. So Fudge, Richard Paglinawan, Andrew. . . .

TC: Aoki?

GA: Andy . . .

TC: Chang?

GA: Andy Chang. He was my director of social services. I went to him and talked to him about becoming director. At first he was very apprehensive and he told me, "I don't know whether I'm qualified."

I told him, "The fact that you raised that question to me about being qualified means as far as I'm concerned, you're qualified. You're not a know-it-all. You have a lot of things you may not be sure about, and that's the kind of person I want." He became a very, very good director. I want to talk to Andy.

WN: I don't think it's over your head at all, because when you talk about values you're talking about the very basics of growing up. The very basics of things that you learn from your parents and your friends and your mentors.

GA: Especially values in the community now. I had some terrible lawsuits brought against me for [Interstate] H-3—they were trying to block H-3. We were able to overcome all of that, and it was John Waihee's time that he was able to complete the actual work that went on. But H-3 was Jack Burns's baby, and it was my baby. We really worked hard. At that time, people were taking sides and they were saying they don't want us to destroy the nice valley out there. They were thinking very selfishly about what they wanted, but they were not thinking about the greater need for the community—transportation. You put H-1, H-2, why not H-3? They were saying they didn't want us to do H-3. So it was values. They were very selfish in wanting to keep H-3 undeveloped so they could enjoy what they had. But I think we created H-3, went ahead, and we created H-3 so that they could enjoy it more than they would have if H-3 was not built.

I have people who write me letters. Just last month I received a letter from somebody reminding me and him that I played such an important role. I stuck to my guns and I waited and made H-3 possible. They were thanking me for hanging in. I think that we've had discussions about education, and before I remember some people saying, "We don't have children getting an education, going to school. Why should we support that?" They forgot that education was not just to support a child, but it had benefits to everybody by having education.

We talk now about H-3, and the rail. Much of the rail objection comes from people who say, "We're paying for it windward side, east Honolulu side, but we're not getting any benefit." Again, it comes down to people's values and looking at it from their point of view and not saying there are some things that happened in our community that we're responsible for, we all get benefits from, or some people get benefits from, but all of us have responsibility for. I'm looking at this thing and how it ties up to what we do. At one time. . . .

Okay. All right. [GA acknowledges assistant's reminder about schedule.] (MK laughs.)

Before, it happens to me, but not as much as before. You stop and you're going to make a left turn. Before, as soon as you did that, people coming from other side stopped to let you through. Today, you have many, many cars pass until you find somebody who has that value and stops for you and lets you make turn. How important it is to the community for us to acknowledge and want to appreciate and want to live the kind of values that make it possible for somebody else to be able to do things. I think that's what has got me thinking.

MK: Yeah. How do you get back that kind of feeling?

We better let you go. We'll get scolded by Kay. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-7-5-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

May 22, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

WN: Okay. This is session number five with Governor George Ariyoshi. Today is May 22, 2012. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto, and Tom Coffman.

So this is session number five, Governor. So good morning.

GA: Good morning.

WN: Do you [MK] want to start?

MK: Last time we were here, we had you going to McKinley High School. We had you graduating from McKinley High School. So we thought, "Let's pick up from there." After you graduated from McKinley High School, you started at the University of Hawai'i. What was it like when you started your first university classes?

GA: We had in our freshman class many boys there. Male and female, pretty much even. But the sophomore class, smaller number of male students. Junior class I only knew there were two male students. The rest were all women. I didn't know any senior male—I did not personally know, but I didn't recognize any male student who was a senior.

MK: How did this disproportionate number of females to males affect your life there?

(Laughter)

At UH [University of Hawai'i]?

GA: Actually, I became very good friends with some of the sophomore girls. Like Hazel Ikenaga is a good friend of mine. She became Richard Mamiya's wife. Because she had a boyfriend who was away, I guess it was very convenient to help out.

MK: What was the mood like on campus with so many of the men away in service?

GA: For us I think freshman students—almost the same as high school, because everything that we did in high school we did at the university. The only difference was the classes

that we went to were different. We had all kinds of sports activities. We had commando training. Bert Chan Wa. Part of the phys[ical] ed[ucation] activities we had to go through very rigorous training—running, duck walk, pushups. So much that when I went to the service—our PT [physical training] part of service, running the mile and coming back, doing all of that—I found it really easy.

MK: That training that you spoke about at UH, was that part of ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps]?

GA: No, it was part of phys ed. I didn't do any ROTC.

That very rigorous physical training was our phys ed activity. He would make us start off by running. We would run around starting off with Hawai'i Hall where the administration building now is, Bachman Hall. From there that's the whole playground area. From there we ran around down to the amphitheater and back. We were pretty tired. Then he'd tell us, "One more time."

(Laughter)

We had to go one more time, come back, and he tells, "One more time."

WN: Do you remember who the instructors were?

GA: Bert Chan Wa.

WN: Bert . . .

GA: I think it was Bert Chan Wa. He made us duck walk. We would go down and duck walk and start off ten, fifteen and he tell, "Okay, ten more." We did a lot of it so that when I got through it I went to the service in May of that year—oh I was in good shape.

MK: In terms of academics, what was it like for you at UH?

GA: (Pause) The difference I think was that a lot of lectures. Whereas (pause) in high school it was more discussions, reading. But I think that was the primary difference between the transition from high school to the university. I don't recall all the courses I had. I think we had history. We had speech. Chemistry. Zoology. (Pause) Those are the courses I remember taking.

WN: Was there any kind of pre-law curriculum?

GA: No. No. I was told that to go to law school and become a lawyer, it's good to have a varied background. Not necessarily legal background, but very—all kinds of background. We had in law school engineering students, we had people who had education background, we had people from—Morris Shinsato was a school principal.

MK: But at that time when you were a freshman, what were you thinking of majoring in, at UH?

GA: I was not thinking about majoring in anything.

(Laughter)

Except that I wanted to become a lawyer and go to law school.

WN: So you took basically your . . .

GA: General yeah.

WN: . . . general courses.

GA: Yeah.

WN: 'Cause you were there for only a year.

GA: Right. Uh-huh. That's the part I think about liberal arts education, there are some people who feel that when you go to university the university should train you for a vocation. I think that's important too, but I think equally important is a liberal arts education that one gets. To me, that is very important part of the educational process of the university.

Anyway, I'm very upset that the university chancellor is going to get \$100,000 more than the current chancellor. And \$100,000 more than what he was earning back in whatever school that he came from.

WN: Delaware. Delaware.

GA: For me, I'm very cost conscious at the university. I think they ought to save the money so they can lessen the cost of education for the students.

MK: Like in your time, how much did it cost to go to school at UH?

GA: I think almost nothing. I don't remember paying tuition. It was cheap because when I came out of the army I went to Michigan State [University]. Tuition at Michigan State was maybe \$200—out-of-state student. (Chuckles)

MK: Wow.

GA: I stayed in the dormitory and Michigan State had a quarterly system—three months, yeah. So three months in the dormitory, I paid for the room and for food \$180 a quarter.

WN: Wow.

(Laughter)

GA: My law school . . .

WN: What happened, yeah?

GA: My law school—my tuition, was under \$500, and books about \$250.

MK: By the standards of those days, how did it work out?

GA: Huh?

MK: By the standards of those days, how did it compare? By today's standards that's really low and seems so affordable. But in your time?

GA: Our GI Bill provided—gave us seventy-five dollars a month. That's what we felt we had to try to live by.

MK: Just going back a little bit, when you were at UH, the war is on and there's that prospect that you will go off to war. How did that affect your thinking about being in school?

GA: I think we wanted to get the basic education. But we were also aware that the draft was coming by and that we were going to the service soon. So, I think we—all of us at the university—we tried to do our best in school knowing that at some point we were going to the service. We had already taken our physical and had been classified 1A so that we were going to the service.

I think it was more after I left the university and went to the service. When I was in Japan for example, "Do you want me to re-enlist?" And I wanted to because I was very interested in the timing that I had at that time which was anti-trust and cartels, trying to break up the *zaibatsu*. But I also wanted to go home quickly so I could get started.

When I came back---what had happened after when I came back from service was going to university. All the veterans are coming back and they were having drinking parties. All kinds of things going on. I decided that I had to get out of that environment, because I was concerned that if I stayed I was not going to be able to continue my education. I immediately---soon I came back and I went to one semester. Spring semester. As soon as the semester was over I decided right away I was going to leave.

I went to [University of] Michigan. I wanted to go Michigan—Michigan Law School. Or not law school, but undergraduate work because they had a combined curriculum. Three years Michigan undergraduate and then you can go to law school. That's what I wanted to do—hurry it up. I didn't even register and I just went. When I got there they told me Michigan had been closed to out-of-state registration. But they told me Michigan State [University] is still open. So I went there and I enrolled at Michigan State right away.

Then I really carried a really heavy load at Michigan State. So I finished the two and a half years that I had remaining, I finished that in a year and a half. Then I came home because I got through in February quarter and I had been accepted for Michigan.

MK: So you really stayed the course.

GA: Yes. Yes.

MK: When you got your draft notice, how did you feel?

GA: Oh, we knew it was coming. We didn't think it was anything unusual. We expected it. It was only a question of when we were going. We got called in May of 1945.

MK: How did your parents react?

GA: My father---my parents. . . . my father didn't say anything. I don't want to say this. . . . for the record. But when I was going off to the service, my father was the last person to see me off. We were going to be bussed off by Pensacola Street. Pensacola, between Beretania and— is it Young Street? On that block over there. I don't know why that place was selected but that's where we were going to get on a bus. My family was there, my father was there. My father didn't say anything to me until just before I had gotten on the bus. My father told me, that he wanted me to come back safely. But he told me, "*Haji wo kakasanai yō ni.*" Don't bring shame, and "*Gambatte, haji wo kakasanai yō ni.*" First time I saw tears in my father's eyes—and I could see the tears welling up in the eyes—and I have never seen him in tears before. I knew what he was saying to me. What he was saying was he wanted me to come back safely, but not at the expense of bringing shame to the family. What he was saying was that if necessary—if it became necessary—he would understand if I faced some dangerous condition. Now, at that time the war in Europe was coming to an end, but the war in Japan was still going on very strong.

MK: What was your mother's reaction?

TC: Can you---before we go on translate, his second sentence. *Gambatte*. Then what did he say after *gambatte* and what does that mean? Could you translate that for us?

GA: *Gambatte* is persevere, hang in there And, *haji wo kakasanai yō ni*, don't bring shame to yourself, be honorable.

TC: You translated the first sentence but you didn't translate the second sentence. I just wanted to get that in the transcript.

MK: So what was your mother's. . . .

GA: My mother didn't say very much.

TC: You know this---they're having this meeting over in the first conference room, which they've never done before and it's creating audio which is disruptive for our purposes. What are you hearing? I'm distressed by this.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: Your mother had not said anything to you?

GA: Not at that particular time, yeah? But she had been talking to me about *ki wo tsukete*, you know. *Gambatte, ki wo tsukete, shikkari yatte.*

MK: How would you translate that?

(Laughter)

GA: To hang in there, to do the best you can.

WN: *Ki wo tsukete* is like be careful.

GA: Be careful, yes.

WN: Take care of yourself, *ki wo tsukete*.

GA: Be careful, take care, you know?

MK: When your father is saying such words to you and your mother has said those things to you, what were you feeling?

GA: (Pause) Well, I was sad that I was leaving my folks. I knew that I was going to be in a situation with. . . things may become very difficult.

MK: Being a . . .

GA: When the war came to an end, I had wanted to go to MIS [Military Intelligence Service]. I wanted to go to see Japan—Pacific Theater. The person who—in fact I remember writing to was Howard Hiroki [MIS interpreter and translator, who served in Pacific Theater]. At that time Howard Hiroki had dealings with the military and he was involved in MIS things. I had written a letter to Howard Hiroki telling him that I wanted to serve in the Pacific area.

MK: Why is it that you wanted to serve in the MIS in the Pacific area?

GA: Well, I guess I had an uncle who had gone through MIS. Someone at MIS, I asked them what they were doing, and I felt that maybe that's where I could be most useful. Even though my language is not as good as the other MIS people—the older ones who preceded me. (Pause) But I guess it was my desire if I'm going to go anyway that I wanted to be very useful to the country.

WN: So when the war ended you joined the MIS. After the war ended that's when you became part of it. So while the war was still going on and you got drafted, what was the unit that you were joining, for basic training?

GA: Basic training?

WN: Mm-hmm.

GA: I took my basic training in Texas. Camp Hood, Texas. Eventually, basic training, before I completed it, I was called out one morning. They were going out bivouac and they told me, "Stay back. You're not going." They told me I was being transferred to Fort Snelling.

WN: Oh, I see.

GA: Before I completed my basic training, I was called to go to Fort Snelling.

WN: Which is a MIS language school in Minnesota.

GA: Yes.

MK: You know if we can back up a little bit. I know that after you were drafted, where were you inducted?

GA: Schofield [Barracks].

MK: Schofield? What unit were you inducted into over there?

GA: We were not inducted to any particular unit. We were just inducted to the service and from there we were going to be transferred and we were there for—I was in Schofield only for about six or seven days and went through all the physical exams and everything else. Then, I was told I was going to the Mainland. I didn't know where I was going but I ended up going to Camp Beale. Camp Beale. That was where all these. . . . Oh no no, we went to Angel Island. That's where we went. The ship went to Angel Island. From Angel Island, they sent me to Camp Beale.

MK: What was it like leaving Hawai'i?

GA: For me I had not left—I had not even gone to another island. I had never traveled so it was a big experience for me to leave. I remember on the ship—the sergeant that I was with the six or seven days that I was in Schofield—the person in charge the sergeant. He was very nice to me. My parents invited him—took care of him—some meals at home. When we were leaving Schofield, he got word to my mother that I was leaving. He even told her where our ship was going to be leaving from. So my mother made lots of *onigiri* [Japanese rice ball] and things. She brought it to the place where we going with the ship. So, I don't know how she was able to get it to me, but I got it and, everybody else started eating it. I couldn't eat it because before the ship left the port I was already seasick.

(Laughter)

I guess it was the smell of the ship you know? I guess very—my emotions also. So, as we were passing by Aloha Tower—I could still see Aloha Tower—and I was going overboard heaving, you know. So sick.

WN: While your shipmates ate the *nigiri*.

(Laughter)

MK: So how did you fare the rest of the voyage?

GA: I was sick for---I missed seven meals. The boys used to bring back for me bread and cracker. I get my canteen and hang it over my bunk. It was very smelly and terrible. So many people going down deep under the ship on the bottom. When you lie down like this—I think we had bunks of four. So when you're lying down the bunk right in front of you is only like this you know you can barely enough room to squeeze in. I took my canteen out and I hung it up there and I put the cracker and the bread there and I nibbled on the cracker and bread. You know I missed several meals. I was really sick. I was okay when I went up aboard during the day. But the moment I started come down I got really sick.

MK: What was the name of your ship?

GA: I don't know.

(Laughter)

It was a navy ship. Normally it took about four or five days to get across. I think our ship didn't go in a straight line and it took us about seven days—seven, eight days—to get over to Angel Island.

WN: It had to zigzag.

GA: Yeah.

WN: Had to zigzag over.

GA: Yeah. Angel Island, when I got there the thing that I really enjoyed there was ice cream, “Wow, there's good ice cream here!”

(Laughter)

WN: When you were inducted and you were going to go overseas, you were going with the idea you may see combat duty. Is that what it was? So, were you afraid?

GA: Yeah. I was. . . . I was afraid. I was concerned. I wondered whether I'm going to see my parents—my folks—again. My father told me, “*Gambatte, haji wo kakasanai yō ni. Buji ni kaeru yō ni.*” What was he saying, “*buji ni kaeru,*” to come back safely. But, to hang in there and not bring shame. Almost like contradictory terms, but I knew exactly what he was saying to me. He wanted me to be safe, but not bring shame. He wanted me to be honorable also.

WN: The 442[nd Regimental Combat Team] boys a couple years before, a year before, went overseas to fight in the European Theater. You were going in essence to the Pacific-Asian Theater. Did that ever come up in your mind that you may be fighting Japanese?

GA: Mm-hmm. [yes]

WN: Was that strange for you or anything like that?

GA: No, I think that. . . . I recall my---before the war started when I was going Japanese [-language] school, there was a teacher there who started to talk to us about the war—what might happen—and who also began to tell us that he had relatives in Japan. There might be a conflict between himself and his relatives. But he felt also that he was Japanese but adopted—became an Ameri. . . . no, lived in Hawai'i and was teaching in the Japanese school and I think his loyalty was with the United States because he told us that “*gambatte bai,*” even if you have relatives, “*shikata ga nai*” you know? You got to do what has to be done. *Shikata ga nai* is you can't help it. So, I kind of had that feeling when my induction notice came about that I had a responsibility. (Pause)

WN: Was it a mixed unit as you were shipping out or was it all Japanese going out?

GA: No. When you say shipping out yeah?

WN: Mm-hmm.

GA: The war came to an end while I was taking basic training, so when I went to Fort Snelling and I got my language training there, the war was already over. Then when I came back on my way to Japan we stopped by in Hawai'i. We were not assigned to any specific task in Japan, we're just going over to occupation. After we got to Japan, we started to get assigned to different parts. I don't know how I got assigned to anti-trust and cartel.

MK: Before---when you left Hawai'i, was that a mixed group or was it just AJAs [Americans of Japanese Ancestry]?

GA: AJAs.

MK: Just AJAs.

GA: On the ship yeah? All AJAs.

MK: And then you went to Camp Beale. From Camp Beale . . .

GA: Oh, I'm sorry. You're talking from here to the Mainland.

MK: Yes.

GA: Yeah, they were all AJAs.

MK: All AJAs. And then you made your way to Camp Beale, California. From Camp Beale you made your way to Fort Hood.

GA: Fort Snelling, yeah. No no, to Camp Hood.

MK: Camp Hood in Texas.

GA: Yes.

MK: What was that like going from Beale to Hood?

GA: Well, you know the people that I went up with, they all started to get sent out. I was the last person remaining back. I wondered what was happening to me and where I was going. My orders came through to travel and I went---myself now---to Camp Hood. When I got to Camp Hood, I joined the group of Hawaiian people who were with me initially, but who got shipped out to Camp Hood. I'm not sure why I was delayed I didn't go together with them to Camp Hood because I got to training camp about one week later.

MK: When you were going from Camp Beale to Hood, you're traveling on train?

GA: On the train. It took me . . .

MK: Any stops?

GA: It took me three days to get there. I had to---because the trains were very slow and we made many stops along the way. I think in a town called Elco, was the last stop before I actually got into Texas.

MK: As you stopped along the way, what did you notice about going southward?

GA: I wandered to the restroom. I got to the restroom and I looked and it said Colored and White. I stopped there and I didn't know where I was supposed to—which restroom I was to go. I told 'em, "I'm not white I think I'm colored. More colored." So I used the colored restroom. That's when I began to really notice that there was a lot of discrimination in our country.

MK: Prior to that in your contacts with Caucasians, how was it?

GA: In Hawai'i we never have any problem. We never any had a problem except the sergeant who was really good to me, he couldn't pronounce our names. (Chuckles)

Fukuhara, he go "Fuck-you-Hara." (Chuckles) So he knew that he was being called "Fukuhara," but he wouldn't respond.

(Laughter)

WN: How did he do with Ariyoshi?

GA: "Arisho!"

WN: Arisho.

(Laughter)

TC: Governor, can I? Okay, just a second. Excuse me.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

TC: Okay rolling. Why don't you just go ahead with your story and then I'll back up a bit. What happened when you went to Camp Hood?

GA: Camp Beale, we had a lot of the 442[nd] veterans coming back already you know? They would tell us about all the discrimination that they had to go through, the fights that they had to go through. They were telling us, "You can go to the downtown here now, and you go to restaurant there, and see if they will serve you." Because they told me when they went to the restaurants they were told, "We don't serve Japs in this restaurant." So I heard all these stories about discrimination that—what they had to go through.

MK: What did you think hearing these stories?

GA: I couldn't believe. I couldn't believe that (pause) they were going through that kind of experience, things like that were happening to them, they were in uniform—American uniform—and it's hard for me to believe that being in an American uniform that they were being told that they couldn't eat in a restaurant—they would not be served.

So I became very aware of how we had no trouble in Hawai'i growing up. I had no trouble with the military in Schofield. But for the first time I'm hearing about this discrimination against them because of their being Japanese.

I went to Fort Snelling—I'm sorry, Camp Hood. Because I was late, I was not put into the same platoon as the other Hawai'i boys. There were about seventeen or eighteen boys who were there before me. They were in one platoon. I got assigned—put into another platoon all by myself.

We had some Mexican people and there was my—not my sergeant, but the sergeant who was in charge of the platoon for the Hawai'i boys—he really liked the boys and he was really good to them, but he thought I was Mexican because I was not in the same company. He was not my sergeant but he used to pick on me. While marching off to the firing range, he would hit my head [helmet], like “ping.” I took it all, I didn't do anything.

While we were waiting to go on the firing range, he started bothering me a little bit—that he was doing that to me. We waited to get out in the firing range. I felt small pebbles being thrown at me. I kind of wanted to see where it was coming from and I watched. Then all of a sudden from the direction it was coming, I saw this movement of hands. I looked, it was the same sergeant who was doing that—throwing the pebbles to me. When I saw that I was so angry. There was a rock—small piece of rock, stone—I picked it up I walked over to him and I told him, “You can do anything you want to me in the line of duty, but you can't do this to me, so I'll smash you.” And I did it—the boys grabbed me quickly you know? Then I told the sergeant, I say, “You know what? Tonight when we get back, I'll see you. I'll see you in private.”

I was going to have it out with him. I was so angry with him. But after and while, he at that point, he made the statement, “Hot-headed Mexican!”

The guys—Hawai'i boys—go, “Hey, he's not Mexican. He's one of ours, he's from Hawai'i.”

He said, “He's from Hawai'i? How come he's not with us?”

“We don't know why he's not with us, but he's in another platoon. But he's from Hawai'i. He's one of us.”

The sergeant felt really bad. I told him I'd come to see him, but he came to see me—to apologize to me. He tell me, “I'm really sorry,” he said, “I thought you were Mexican. I didn't know.”

But then I said, “What's the difference, you know?” When I'm from Hawai'i or Mexican for him to be like that to me, not. . . . So I was still angry.

And he apologized. He tell me, “I'm really sorry that I would not—I was wrong and I didn't want to do anything.”

It was perfect to have it out with him. But, the other boys told me, “Hey, cool down too. He’s our sergeant and he’s good to us. He really means it when he says he didn’t know you were from Hawai‘i.”

I had to let it go at that, but that’s what I began to notice—discrimination against Mexicans. Every time they were assigned anything, they would say, “*No comprendo*.” So in a sense, they were being picked on but this was because of what they were saying and how they wanted to avoid doing what they had to do. When they had assignments they say, “*No comprendo. No comprendo*.” (Pause) But, I could sense discrimination that I never sensed before.

MK: How were your own relations with the Mexican men in your unit?

GA: I was okay. I was okay with the Mexicans. I had no trouble with them. I got along. In my own unit I didn’t have any problem. I became very close to—I still don’t remember his name—his name was Brown from California. He was strong—big strong guy. Somehow he took a liking to me. He really took care of me. He wanted to be sure nobody did anything to me. So I was very lucky that I had a friend like that who took a liking to me. When we had to go out on pass—and we didn’t have very many passes—he went out with me to be sure that nothing happened to me.

MK: When you say that he made sure that nothing would happen to you. . . .

GA: He protected me. (Chuckles) He protected me. . . . and he knew about what had happened to the sergeant—what’s you know. So he didn’t want to see anything like that happen to me.

WN: What was it like if you remember how they treated Mexicans in Texas? For example, you said there were some restaurants that didn’t serve Japanese. I was wondering was it the same way with Mexicans? Did anybody tell you anything—any stories like that?

GA: No, I didn’t hear any stories but I began to see it. I began to see the discrimination. How they’re kind of treated meanly—in a mean fashion. How they were kind of looked down upon. How they talked down on them. That was a new experience for me.

If I had been raised in a plantation and saw this kind of discrimination, I think it wouldn’t have shocked me as much. But to not having had that kind of experience and having been in a situation where I played and worked with everybody, you know? So for me, this was a bad experience, really new experience. I understood the prejudice against the Japanese because I knew of the internment. I knew that there were feelings against the Japanese.

In fact, when I went to Fort Snelling—I didn’t drink so I went out and every weekend I got to take care of and bring everybody back.

(Laughter)

GA: Six, seven boys go out drinking, I got to be sure they got back. I used to do that and I was also asked to be the head of my company—of all social activities that we had planned. So they asked me to be chairman of that group to work out dancing, parties, the USO

[United Service Organizations] in St. Paul and Minneapolis. I had made contact with them to arrange for those kind of activities. So I didn't have any trouble myself in that way.

But one night we were out drinking. I was with boys who wanted to drink—stop by a bar for a drink. They were not drunk; they had not caused any trouble or anything like that. In walked a group of sailors. The sailors were there from a naval port very close to Fort Snelling. They had come in. So they walked in they saw us and one of them said, "I'm not going to drink the same bottle with a group of Japs!" When he said that, the others looked at us, they told us to get out. They wanted us out so they could drink.

Our group then decided, "Hey, you're not going to. . . ." And Captain Kuramoto used to talk to us about discrimination that he had. Captain Kuramoto was with the 442nd at one time. He was a medical doctor, but he was our CO [commanding officer] and when the people told us to get out, our boys said, "No, we're not going to get out. We were here first. You don't want to drink with us, you get out." From there all of a sudden—bang!—they started fighting.

The group of people I was with at that point—[Teruo] "Blackie" Tanonaka and Tamura and (pause) Kengo Ogitali. I think his name was. They were all good fighters. So, when they fought small guys they all had the upper hand. Quickly they called the SPs [shore police] came. They took all our names down and all the sailors were told to go away quickly and they all left.

So our names were taken down and so I came back to camp and I went to Captain Kuramoto and say, "Captain, we had a fight in a bar downtown." He wanted to know what happened—how it started. I told him about these guys coming in, telling us they don't want to drink in the same bar with Japs, and they wanted us to leave.

Captain Kuramoto said, "Back in the day at Camp McCoy, those were the fighting words," and he said, "I'm not going to punish you folks no matter what they tell me to do so you folks don't worry, you're not going to get punished for that. You were right to stand your ground." I came back and I told the boys Captain Kuramoto said no matter what orders come down he's not going to punish us. They all felt that the captain was a real good guy, that he understood what we had gone through at that point.

But that was my job—to bring everybody back when they drank.

(Laughter)

MK: I'm curious, how come you weren't drinking?

GA: I don't know. I never drank. Yeah. Only one time, we had a parade at Fort Snelling. We came back after the parade, it was hot. Captain said, "We have some cool drinks downstairs." So we all ran down there. Cool drink—soft drink, no more soft drink, only beer.

(Laughter)

GA: So I was hot too so I opened one bottle of beer. I drank that. I drank over three-fourths of it. It was really good! Then I stopped and I was going to drink the rest and I couldn't drink any more. All of a sudden it was from good to bad.

(Laughter)

GA: I never drank. Only three times in my life I've been really drunk.

(Laughter)

MK: I don't think we have to ask you when! (Laughs)

GA: No, and that was New Year's Eve, when I was at Michigan State. We had Hawai'i families in Detroit. We stayed at the Hawai'i families. It was through parties—make the rounds of all the Hawai'i families. Every place I went, they all come to me; they want to have me drink. I hated the taste of it. So highball was too much. So I took a jigger and I took it straight and I just downed it. I downed it. The first time I did it I go (makes gagging sound). (Laughs)

Three times that happened to me. Three different than New Year's Eve. That's the only time I drank.

MK: When you were in Minnesota at Fort Snelling, other than that incident basically how were people treating you in Minnesota?

GA: People were very nice to me, to us. I'm trying to think of the name of the girl who was. . . . Her father was in the insurance business. A very prominent person. She had just graduated from University of Minnesota. I got to know her and we got to know the families. The family took me and another person out to north of Minnesota where we—the start of the Mississippi River. Lake Itasca. We walked across. They told me that you walked across, you've crossed, you've walked across the Mississippi. We had people like that who were very good to us. They invited us over to their homes.

MK: What was it like being in the cold country?

GA: It was cold. (Laughs) I remember every morning at Michigan State we had to march out in the morning to classroom about three quarters of a mile. By the time we got to the other side, all of our—our nose would get watery. Get watery but all freeze. Everything freezing in my nose. We got to the other side, had classes and for lunch we had to march back. After lunch we had to march back for class. After that, march back in the evening for dinner.

So we had three quarters mile—one, three miles we had to walk back and forth. Three miles. Three nights a week at night we had to march over to the classroom again for study period.

WN: This is at Michigan State or at Fort Snelling?

GA: Fort Snelling. At Fort Snelling.

- TC: Could I interject. Question because I thought your stories were so interesting Governor. You said that you were aware of some, antagonism towards people of Japanese ancestry in Hawai'i.
- GA: Not in Hawai'i. I did not have that.
- TC: Generally. Generally. Not in Hawai'i.
- GA: Yes.
- TC: Did you initially think it was a matter of the fact that you were from a country—meaning that your ancestors were from a country which was an enemy country at that point. 'Cause that's one type of negative feeling versus simply feeling a racial antagonism, a form of racial discrimination.
- GA: I think for the people who discriminated I don't think there's a difference. You cannot separate the fact that people were at war and the fact that Japanese. . . . Because the prejudice against the Mexicans for example was not because of war with their country. Yet there was that kind of prejudice. In our case, I think part of that prejudice was because our ancestors came from a country that we were at war with.
- TC: When you encountered these various layers and aspects of discrimination—it's kind of a whole aspect of you that I did not really know about. I knew there was a couple of very small instances, but did it cause you to really struggle with wondering, "What is the nature of my country?"
- GA: No, I never questioned that. I think it was individual (clears throat). I was conscious of the fact that there were other people who were very good to us and treated us very nice. (Coughs) Treated us very nicely. So, I did not feel that the country was discriminating against me. In fact, I didn't have any strong feelings against the relocation. (Pause) At that time.
- TC: How did you find out about the relocation? At what point did you find out about it? I'm curious.
- GA: I think when I was in Hawai'i I was aware of the people being relocated because my principal, Miles Cary, was sent to I think Poston, Arizona.
- TC: You knew that he had gone to—out there.
- GA: Yes. Yeah. And I felt that he had gone there because he would go there to make life as pleasant as possible for the people who were going to be relocated into camp there.
- MK: Since you had been going to Japanese-language school and you were familiar with Hongwanji . . .
- GA: Yes.
- MK: . . . were you aware of people from Hawai'i—like the Buddhist ministers or the Japanese-language school teachers and principals being taken?

GA: I was not aware of them being taken. In fact one of—Jeanie's uncle [D. Toru Nishikawa] was at camp and I didn't even know that they had that kind of camp here in Hawai'i at that time.

WN: Which camp was this?

GA: Honouliuli they had the camp. Jeanie's uncle was a Japanese reporter on a Japanese paper. Because of that he was interned at Honouliuli. But I didn't know. At that time I didn't even know that they had a camp like that.

TC: So you went off to war. You went off to your military service. You never knew there was Honouliuli Camp.

GA: No I didn't know that.

TC: So you found out about it from like—much later then?

GA: Oh found out about it many years later.

TC: Oh, that's interesting. I have—for what it's worth and I'd be curious but—I have run across most people who were not aware either.

GA: In fact, I think I first heard about it when I met Jeanie. I met the uncle, and Jeanie told me later on that her uncle was interned at Honouliuli.

TC: This history is very slow to come out.

GA: I think it was yeah. I think most people in Hawai'i—in Honolulu—were not aware of Honouliuli.

WN: Were you aware of any other camps? Like Crystal City, Texas had an internment camp. Were you aware of that at all?

GA: No. No. When I went to the service and after that I began to hear all of the fights that the 442nd and the 100th Infantry Battalion boys were involved in and all the discriminatory efforts. They never fought because they wanted to, but they felt that they had to defend themselves because they were being criticized for being Jap and very antagonistically criticized for being Japs.

MK: Also, since you heard about those types of fights, had you also heard about fights between AJAs from Hawai'i and the AJAs from the Mainland? They would say fights between the *buddhaheads* and the *kotonks*.

GA: No I never heard about that kind of fight. Although I knew that there were some discrimination between the local Hawai'i AJAs and the Mainland AJAs. When I was at Fort Snelling we had some Mainland AJAs together with us and we got along nicely. We didn't have any trouble with them.

MK: At Fort Snelling what was the instruction like?

GA: We were being taught Japanese beyond what we learned. More *kanji*, more speaking.

MK: How rigorous was it?

GA: Well, it was morning to lunchtime. After lunch to dinnertime and three times a week, twice—two hours in the evening and we had to go and study. It was quite intensive.

WN: Would you say it was speaking and reading and writing were equal? Or was one more than the other?

GA: I think we had both, yeah? (Pause)

MK: How did you fare? How did you do?

GA: I did pretty good. I think because of my previous language experience at Hongwanji, it gave me the information. So I was in a top class in our group.

TC: We need to interrupt and change tape so we'll take a little break.

GA: Okay.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

TC: I'm curious on another vein. You were starting to hear from the stories of the experience of the 100th and 442nd people who were coming back through the military camps of one sort or another. How were they getting there, why were they there, and are there any particular individuals who loom large in your memory?

GA: Camp Beale was the camp from which we went and from there dispersed to various places. So I guess that's the place where people coming back came through Camp Beale also. It was there they were telling us stories about their own experience with discrimination and how they had to deal with it.

TC: Why were they there though? Were they wounded?

GA: No. They were on their way coming home.

TC: The war was over. Combat was over.

GA: Yes.

TC: Okay. Any particular individuals who stand out in your memory?

GA: At that time? No.

TC: There were quite a few around you.

GA: Yeah, but we didn't meet that many because we were our own group going out and they were coming in. A different place. The same camp but a different section of the camp. We happened to meet them at the PX and places that we went to.

TC: Did you regard them as somehow having become different because they had had such extensive combat experience? As battle-hardened or somehow different from before?

GA: I think not so much battle-hardened but I think they came back with resolve. That they tried to do things in the battlefield and they wanted to come home and be sure that in civilian life that they could participate and make the community better. I don't know whether or not the people who were going to school when I came back—all of those people—would have been at the university had they not gone to war. But I think coming back and the GI Bill made it possible for many people who might not have gone to the university to be there. I think being there also, I think they came back with a resolve that they wanted to participate in the community—to be sure that things were done right in the community.

TC: When you talk about this resolve, did you hear this theme of their resolve even when you would see them up in the military camps on the Mainland?

GA: No.

TC: You didn't hear it then.

GA: No, no.

TC: Okay. It was not until later.

GA: Yeah.

TC: Okay. All right. Thank you.

MK: When we took a little break, you were about to tell us a story involving Native Americans—Indians. You were instructed to do or not do certain things.

GA: They told us, "Don't give any alcohol to the Indian because they cannot take the alcohol and they go crazy." By crazy they meant, you don't know what they're going to do.

MK: When you were in Texas, were there times when you came into contact with Indians?

GA: No, no. I met only one Indian girl, one of the men wanted to date her. But they were not freely moving around so we wouldn't see many of them.

MK: When you went to Fort Snelling it was basically contact with the men at the MIS school and then Caucasians outside.

GA: Yes. Yes. And that's the first time—I personally never witnessed any anti-Japanese feelings. Not at Camp Beale. We were told about it, and not during my basic training. The first time was at Fort Snelling.

TC: What was your experience in these Caucasian homes that you were invited into? What was it like?

GA: They were really good to us. I happened to get close to a family—I can't think of the name now—who had me over for dinner at their home. Took me to Lake Itasca. That's a great distance. We had one night at the hotel there—some place there. They took care of all the expenses. Treated us all to everything. So they were really good to us.

And the people of Minnesota basically were. . . . what nationality?

WN: Norwegian or. . . . Swedish?

MK: Scandinavians yeah?

TC: More like Germans, Swedes.

GA: Not German. More around Scandinavian countries.

TC: Norwegians. Finnish. Northern they're Scandinavians mostly. Danish.

GA: Not Polish. Not. . . . anyway the Minnesota people have very strong—that racial, ethnic group. But we were—this is not only me but so many of the nisei people there met so many Caucasian people—families—and they were really good to us.

TC: Were you aware of those settlers generally tending to be deeply religious people? The churches in that area are very strong.

GA: No, I didn't notice that. Because nobody asked me if I would come to church.

MK: When you went to these homes were they mostly like you? Second-generation Americans or more removed you think?

GA: I think many of them were second-generation like us.

MK: What was it like for a young man who came from a house that would have *misoshiru* and *narazuke* and *sashimi* to go to a Caucasian home?

GA: We adjusted to the taste because we went through basic training and that's what we had—non-Japanese things. My first meal when I went to Fort Snelling and I saw rice—white rice. I got white rice and I went for seconds, and white rice with shoyu never tasted so good.

(Laughter)

WN: This is white sticky rice?

GA: Yeah. White rice. They cooked it the way we eat rice here. They had white rice and come with tofu.

MK: Tofu?

WN: Wow.

GA: Tofu and white rice. I went back for seconds and I got plenty of rice and I put shoyu on top because it was all gone. But shoyu. . . .

MK: You missed home then.

GA: I missed the home cooking. The only rice I ate when I was in basic training was rice pudding, and I didn't enjoy that.

(Laughter)

WN: The thought of putting rice in something sweet. (Chuckles)

GA: Yeah. Didn't sound right to me. (Chuckles)

MK: When you were at the MIS the war in Japan ended.

GA: The war in Japan ended.

MK: So you knew about the atomic bombs that had been dropped.

GA: Yes. In fact, when I was at camp we talked of the war being ended and how the war came to end. We had a very serious discussion about whether that's the right thing for America to do. There were some of us who felt that if the atomic bomb was wrong then it was equally wrong if we were the ones who used it. What's going to prevent somebody else from using it in the future? So we had that kind of discussion at the basic training camp.

MK: That was among the AJAs?

GA: Yes, among AJAs and Caucasians. There were some Caucasians like our sergeants who felt the same way. Sometimes we had a tendency—we think one way and the Caucasians think another way. But, I think even amongst the Caucasian groups there can be great diversity of feelings and opinions. I remember one Caucasian—he was a lieutenant who really questioned whether or not it's the right thing. The way he put it, "What is the right thing for my country to do? If we can do that to somebody else, somebody else might be able to do it. How do we stop somebody else from doing it to us in the future?" That's what I think started the discussion—everybody talking about the war coming to an end.

TC: Did you have an opinion about this at this point or were you. . . .

GA: Yeah. I felt that it was the wrong thing to do. That I could understand the president wanting to do it because he felt he would save many lives. But our desire to do the right thing does not mean that justifies everything you do. To me it's got to be done in the right way.

TC: In this discussion were people really free to express their opinion? Did you feel free to speak up and . . .

GA: Yes. I felt free. I guess the group of people that I was with. . . . not only the Hawai'i people, but the other Caucasians like my friend Brown from California. He really felt strongly the way I felt.

WN: And you mentioned that you were somewhat surprised that not all Caucasians felt the same way. There were differences within the group. What about within the AJAs? Were there differences in opinion on this issue?

GA: You know most AJAs didn't say what they felt at that point. I guess it was because they were concerned about what people may say about [them], "Oh, you're saying that because you're Japanese"

WN: But you weren't afraid.

GA: No. I felt strongly about that.

TC: So you spoke up in these discussions. You participated. Did any AJAs tell you, "Hey George, pipe down."?

GA: No.

TC: No. So it was a pretty open environment. That is a very relatively cerebral environment for an army. You were in a very unusual kind of thing.

GA: I think AJAs---when I went to Fort Snelling—and we're all mostly AJAs from Hawai'i and a few from the Mainland—I think we were very open with each other and we didn't condemn anyone for feeling or saying anything within our group.

Oh there was one guy—kind of bully guy—and he was bully at the beginning. One day, he met another fellow from Hawai'i who was not big and strong but he told the guy Keigo, he [Keigo] said, "You beat me up now. When you're sleeping I'll get a two-by-four and I'm going to bash you over the head." The guy got really scared. He thought this fellow might really do that. So he completely changed. From being kind of bully guy—pushing people around, telling people around—he stopped doing that. I still remember the person who said that, Keigo Tamai.

Keigo was a really frank guy. In fact, when we had a discussion within our company about how people get treated and discrimination, Keigo stood up and he scratched his head, he said, "You know as far as I'm concerned, somebody call me a 'Jap' got to fight me." He made it very clear how he stood on somebody calling him a Jap.

TC: At this point do you remember any discussions in your group of shaping the future of Hawai'i? Attempting to shape the future of Hawai'i?

GA: No. I think we were too young and too much immediate concern before us.

MK: Because you're a Japanese American but from Hawai'i, did that make any difference in how people treated you for being from Hawai'i?

GA: When I went to Michigan State it did. I was eating at a cafeteria—a restaurant—at East Lansing. I was seated at a table eating and a fellow came up to me, sat down in front, [he said], "Can I sit here?" So we sat down and we started talking. We talked about Hawai'i. He asked where I was from and I said I was from Hawai'i. Shortly after that, he called me

and he wanted to take me home—Thanksgiving dinner in his home. The fact that I was from Hawai‘i made an impact on him.

MK: What was it about your being from Hawai‘i that made a difference?

GA: I don’t know whether it was because of the war stories about the AJAs from Hawai‘i and their performance, or I don’t know whether or not he had met somebody from Hawai‘i before. But for him to come---lots of places he can sit, but for him to come and sit—ask me whether he can sit with me—and start talking to me and invite me to Thanksgiving dinner at his home. I couldn’t go because I had some other things to do.

MK: That was a nice invite yeah?

GA: Yeah. But you know, both at Michigan State and Michigan I got to tell you, that I got the best of treatment. People were so nice to us. Everywhere we went. Not necessarily because I was from Hawai‘i. Maybe because I was Japanese and not a Caucasian person. People went out of their way to extend friendship to me. Law school my classmates were all so good to me. “Come talk to me.” And Michigan State—everybody, dormitory they were so nice to us.

WN: Before we get to Michigan State . . .

GA: We had at Michigan State we had a tradition that when you graduate—Red Cedar River comes right through the campus there, see? So when you graduate they’re going to catch and throw in the river. I found out that there was a group of people planning to do that right after dinner. So I didn’t show up for dinner.

(Laughter)

MK: Oh my goodness.

WN: So there’s a lot of hazing going on.

GA: Yeah. Right.

MK: So, we’re going to---I’m going to back you up a little bit and when you were part of the last graduating class at the MIS language school.

GA: Yes, before we moved to Presidio.

MK: When you graduated what happened to you? Where were you shipped first?

GA: We were told that we were going to come to Hawai‘i. We were going to California and then from there come to Hawai‘i.

MK: When you were shipped to Hawai‘i, how long did you stay here?

GA: In Hawai‘i? We were supposed to stay for a short while, but we were here for two months. So we had a good time in Hawai‘i. (Laughs)

WN: What was it like when you saw your parents?

GA: They were really happy. My father was a little bit concerned. Oh not then, after I came back from Japan. A little bit concerned, that maybe I was willing to fight if I had to. My father was concerned when I go to the Mainland that I may get involved in a lot of fighting.

MK: Why do you think he had that concern?

GA: Because when I was a youngster growing up, I was willing to get into many fights and then that's why he had me do judo and boxing. But he never let me take part in any tournament. He had heard stories about how we got involved in different kind of fracas, so he was a little bit concerned and he talked to me about it. He told me that it was not necessary and try not to get into that kind of conflicts. Every time he tells me that I tell myself, my father he was not afraid to get into scraps when he was a stevedore.

TC: There's a story about him throwing somebody in the water off the docks right? Your father threw somebody on the—off the dock into the water one time.

GA: Yeah. Somebody tried to take some monies from him. So my father told him he's not gonna give.

He was told, "But I'm going to take it from you."

And my father said, "No. Try."

My father was able to throw him around and over the dock and in the water.

MK: Why did that person want your father's money?

GA: That's what they did. They not only want money from my father but they wanted to take monies from everybody, anybody that they felt they could take monies from. The Japanese are smaller. So they were very convenient targets.

MK: When you were here for those two months what did you do?

GA: We went to dances. Ewa Gym. Ewa Gym was a very famous dance spot and we had one of my friends in the service at the time was from Waipahu plantation. I used to go to his house and we go to Ewa Gym dances. We had picnics, we did many things that we couldn't do while we were away so we wanted to catch up. Go moonlight picnics. Even then I was not drinking, so one day they said, "Tonight we take you out. And you going drink. We take care of you." So we went to—but as it turned out I never drank and everybody else drank and I had to take care of them.

(Laughter)

MK: So at that time no work was expected from you folks?

GA: We didn't (clears throat)—we had to report camp. We were prepared, (clears throat) we were told we were going to get shipped out at any time but for some reasons I guess they got screwed up on their routine and we were here that long.

MK: Then finally when you were shipped to Japan. How was that? Did you get seasick?

GA: Very seasick. In fact, I got sick from California coming back to Hawai'i. We were not past the Golden Gate Bridge when a lot of the people got sick. I was assigned to bring out the rations from the freezer downstairs up into the mess hall. I was assigned that. I don't know why I got picked but I was given that responsibility. I had to get ten people to do this—put ten people together to do that. But half of the people were sick and the remaining half had to do the extra work in order to get it all out. While we can still pass under the Golden Gate Bridge there were some people who were already sick. I got sick too, but I had to go. I wasn't feeling as good I had to go bring the food. . . . So seasick then.

Going to Japan, I got a little seasick but not too bad. Japan side and coming back was not as bad.

MK: So you were spared that time? (Laughs)

GA: Yeah. Yeah.

WN: When you arrived in Japan, what did you see? I mean, how did you feel about what you saw in Japan?

GA: Well, we were in Zama. We were in Zama for a long time. Maybe three weeks, almost. So our group, we call it "choo-choo pass." You know what "choo-choo pass" is?

WN: What pass?

GA: Choo-choo pass.

WN: Choo-choo pass.

GA: Yeah. Choo-choo pass was you don't get a pass but you sneak out.

(Laughter)

GA: We used to sneak out from and we got on the—Zama—get on the train. The train would go to Tokyo to Tokyo Station. From there we get off and go to nightlife there. Dance halls and we'd go back before late. We'd come back again. You know we had the place where they check everybody going through. But we used to go through once place under the fence—barbed wire fence like this. We used to go under the fence and get through. So many places to go through there it was almost like a hole that you can . . .

WN: Indent. Indentation. (Chuckles)

GA: . . . under the barbed wire. And we had people—I had a friend, whose name was being called. I knew he was gone through choo-choo pass and not come back yet. So as soon as

he came back I said, “Eh, they’ve been calling for you! You better go report,” so he went and report.

And they tell him, “Where you been?”

He said, “Oh, I was taking a rest. So I didn’t hear.”

(Laughter)

MK: What were your observations of the conditions in Japan at that point?

GA: My first experience I had about the Japanese being discriminated against and treated badly was after dinner—after lunch. We eat. We have our can and we got to wash it. Each got to wash our own cans and that’s what we got to use. We had to go through this process first to get the really dirty things out and the next one clean and finally there’s clean water—hot water, all boiling hot. We all stood in line after we did that. There was one person who was sort of coming through, he said, “Hey gook, come here! Like you wash!” He wanted him to do that. So all of us are, “Hey, you’re not supposed to do that. We wash our own. You’re not supposed to do that.”

They started to get antagonistic towards us. Almost wanted to fight with us. They were much bigger than us and they felt that maybe they could take us. But, we all came together. Told ’em, “You know, you’re not supposed to do that. We all do our own things.” So that was the first time that I felt that the discrimination. I saw a lot of it after when I get out of Tokyo. But they used to call ’em “gook, gooks.”

WN: What about in terms of the destruction of Japan?

GA: Destruction.

WN: This is not too soon after the atomic bomb yeah?

GA: Yeah. Yeah. Right. Yeah, we saw lots of places destroyed. Things down, buildings down. Not cleared up yet.

WN: But you didn’t go to Hiroshima.

GA: No I didn’t.

WN: So you were in Tokyo . . .

GA: I was in Tokyo.

WN: . . . you were seeing the effects of the other bombings.

GA: Right. Yes. When I think about what is up now and what was up then, almost everything that’s up now wasn’t there when I was there. Except for General [Douglas] MacArthur’s headquarters, the Dai-ichi [Life] Insurance Company has that, and still has a section—a room—that was used by MacArthur. His headquarters room.

MK: Where were you folks headquartered?

GA: I was in a forestry building where our offices were located. I was in the Yusen Biru that's NYK [Nippon Yusen Kaisha] building when I first got there. I tried to go back—not now—a long time ago. Tried to find the forestry building and I couldn't find it. It was no longer up there. Already destroyed.

MK: How was your contact with Japanese people at that time?

GA: We tried to be good to them. Tried to help them. The first boy that I met was a—Japanese I met—was a shoeshine boy. Seven-year-old shoeshine boy. NYK building is right next to the Marunouchi building—*Tokyo-eki*. Just about Marunouchi, NYK building. The first day that I was there I met this young boy and he was shining shoes and seven years old. I was concerned that seven-year-old child was out there shining shoes. So I asked him, “How come you're doing this?” He told me his parents, everybody's suffering. So he has to do whatever he can to help to earn a few dollars—get some monies. I was very touched by that young boy. My first meal—lunch—I got two pieces of bread I put some butter and jam on it and put it in my napkin. I was not supposed to do that. But I put it in my pocket and went out and gave it to him. When I gave it to him he thanked me and he put it inside—put it in his box. So I told him, “Aren't you hungry? *Onaka suiteinai no?* Aren't you hungry?”

He said, “Oh, I am. But I'm going to take this home and eat this with Mariko. *Mariko to isshoni meshiagaruno.*”

So I told him, “But who's Mariko?”

He said, “Mariko is my three-year-old sister. When I get home I'm going to eat with her.”

I thought to myself, “Nothing elaborate. Just a piece of bread, butter, and jam. And you're going to take it home and hungry as he was, he's not going to eat it. Going to share to Mariko,” and I was really impressed and touched. That's when I thought to myself, “If that's what being Japanese is all about, this spirit is going to help this country recover very rapidly.” I learned from a seven-year-old child the nation of love and caring and relationship—brother and sister—and how important it was.

After that, I told his story to some of my friends and every time we went to a PX [post exchange]—and at that time there was a PX—we would walk over to where a department store is now that used to be the PX for hamburger. Mitsukoshi was a regular PX for hamburger food, that's where we would go downstairs and got the hamburger. We used to buy four, five hamburgers and at that time was cheap. Buy four, five hamburgers come out and give it to the shoeshine boys. So we became very close to all the shoeshine boys. Became all very touched by why they were there and their desire to help.

MK: And then working within your unit, were there any civilian Japanese working with you folks?

GA: You know they---we had different kind of assignments until we could. . . . assigned us. But one of the things that they did one time was they sent me to Waseda University, to

talk with some Japanese who were studying English. We were talking in English with them so they could learn English from speaking to us.

We also had one day an assignment to interview many Japanese on the street and to ask them questions. The questions were all put to them and we had to ask them questions and I don't remember what questions. Innocuous kind of things. But the first day we had that assignment I looked around and all my friends are all gone. I wondered where they had gone to. Later on I found out that they had gone to the bars. They're interviewing all the hostesses.

(Laughter)

And me, I was out on the street trying to talk to people and trying to get to interview them.

(Laughter)

TC: Governor this is maybe a little too abstract but the American government I find evidence in the archives—various archives and various reading—that the American government was very concerned about the future of Japan. Specifically that when they thought about Germany the thinking was more like—Germany was obviously a fascist nation that was led by a notorious dictator. Sort of easy to renounce the past right? But the concern about Japan was that Japan was a nation with a tremendously strong culture and tremendous belief in what they had done. There was some dissent but there wasn't a lot, et cetera, and the American government was very concerned then Japan might not really make that shift and become a democratic nation. The part of the reason why they wanted so many Japanese Americans over there and the people that you knew was because you were Americans, but of Japanese ancestry. Did you see any of this very maybe informal maybe very simple but building relationship and sort of creating a post-war you know. . . .

GA: You know many years later Japanese have said to me they were so grateful to America because Germany was divided. East Germany and West Germany. They could have done that in Japan too but they didn't. Not only they didn't do that, they loved [General Douglas] MacArthur. There was a clash between MacArthur's policy and Truman's policy. Truman felt that MacArthur [Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers during the Occupation of Japan] was being too easy on the Japanese. MacArthur felt it was very important for the Japanese to feel good about America and for Japan to make the fast economic recovery so they can stand on their own feet. And also for Japan to adopt and adhere to the constitution so that it becomes a democratic nation. That was MacArthur's aim—a democratic nation and with a constitution worked out by the Americans but adopted by the Japanese people, and to become economically not dependent on help from the United States. That's something MacArthur wanted.

I was told also about a story about MacArthur being visited by Emperor Hirohito. Emperor went to MacArthur and told him, "You can do anything you want with me. But please save my people." MacArthur was very touched by the emperor, who didn't come to plead for his own life but told him, "You can do anything with me, but take care of my people." More concerned about his people than his own personal safety and life. That had a great impact on MacArthur also with what he did following that thing.

I witnessed when I was there—the short time I was there—I witnessed the attitude of the American country. America, to want to try to see Japan get back on its own two feet as soon as possible—make the kind of economic recovery. In fact when I was assigned to antitrust and cartel—the short while I was there—there was a group saying, “We got to smash them and we got to obliterate them so that they never come back again.” There was a group that said, “Wait now, if you did that, you’re going to smash all the country’s companies that have knowledge about economy and how to make things better and that’s what you’re going to destroy. It’s contrary to American policy, which is to have Japan recover as rapidly as possible.”

That view prevailed, not smash them necessarily but to break them up so that today when you look at Mitsubishi, it’s many Mitsubishi companies but they don’t really think Mitsubishi is one company. But they’re all separate companies. They all---they come together, they work together because their parent’s country where relationship is very important so that relationship is still there—working together—but it’s not the one company.

It was, to me, very obvious about Japan. . . . America—its policy of wanting Japan to recover as rapidly as possible. Japanese to this day are very grateful to America. Number one for not splitting the country up as they did in Germany. Secondly to have the kind of policy that wanted Japan to economically stand on their foot as soon as possible. The economic recovery that took place in Japan—a lot of it because of people and their attitude. Like that seven-year-old boy—you know I’m sure he participated in helping to make the country also. But they all recognize that had it not been for the generosity of the American government to try to support this kind of recovery, Japan would not have gotten where it had. Even though its people tried so hard, worked so hard, and I give them a lot of credit for that. But they all acknowledge that the generosity of the American government helped very much.

And MacArthur, even though he fought his own president, MacArthur wanted to be sure that the Japanese—what happened in Japan would be to make it possible for the recovery to take place as rapidly as possible.

WN: So, a large part of this recovery was to not smash the cartels, to sort of keep them intact? Is that what it was?

GA: Yeah, that was part of it. But that was just I think a very basic—but even beyond that to encourage people to get involved in starting business. It wasn’t very many years after that that Sony got started in a garage. When Mr. [Masaru] Ibuka and Mr. [Akio] Morita got together and got Sony started—they encouraged that kind of activity. So many small businesses got started during that period.

MK: So Governor, when you were with your unit what was your work in relation to the *zaibatsu*? What was the task given to your unit?

GA: We had discussions about what we can do to break it all up. But primarily the decision was made not to obliterate them—break them up—but to be sure that they can continue to exist. I didn’t work very long in that and I got—they asked me if I would re-enlist to stay on, but I decided not to.

What I tried to do after that was talk to people and tell them, “*Kuni no tame*,” you have to get business, start your own business, do whatever you can to make things work out.

MK: So you were saying, “For the sake of your country. . . .”

GA: *Kuni no tame* is for your country. That’s what happened. After the initial occupation process—I’m not sure when occupation ended but the people were being told, not just the people in business, but people who worked in businesses also worked for companies—that the word *kuni no tame* became very, very important. For your country you got to put in the effort, work longer hours, work harder, be more productive, do whatever you can to build up resources in the country.

That’s what happened in Japan and that’s how the country became very strong economically. By 1965, which is fifteen years after the war is over. . . . Oh no, twenty years after the war was over, Japan had gotten so strong that people were beginning to get concerned that they were going to pass America. Japanese businesspeople were working really hard trying to do whatever they were doing—working long hours. At that point it was, “For the country, but for our company. In order to make it for the country, you got to make the company very strong.” They got to put in the hours necessary. Do whatever it takes to be sure the country—the company becomes very prosperous and strong.

MK: When you were in Japan and Japanese people would maybe encounter you—talk with you—what did they want to know about America?

GA: I think they first wanted to know who we were and whether or not we were friend or foe. Because we had American uniforms on. But when we started to talk to them, they quickly realized that what we were trying to do was help. There were many occasions when people tried to push people around—we stepped in and we stopped them from that. I think that reputation began to spread. The AJAs were there and they’re American and they’re American soldiers but they have a heart towards the Japanese and want to help them.

The first time I met a Japanese, he was drunk and he was walking and kind of falling behind. I put my hands to stop him. He turned around and he said, “*Nanka, Nikkeijin ka?*” You know he kind of almost resented that I was a Japanese American and he . . . But that was the only hostile encounter I had with the Japanese.

MK: Generally it was more favorable.

GA: They were all very friendly. We tried to be very friendly to them and reassure them that we were not there to do anything to hurt them. We wanted the country to get well. We wanted them to do everything possible to make the country get well.

WN: Were you familiar with the term *Nikkeijin*?

GA: Mm-hmm.

WN: Before. Before you even got to Japan.

GA: Mm-hmm.

MK: Person of Japanese ancestry.

GA: But *Nikkeijin* is second-generation yeah? So it's generation after the parents that came over.

WN: You were there---that was your job to—I forgot what was the title. What was your title?

GA: It was antitrust and cartels.

WN: Antitrust and cartels. Oh, okay.

GA: That was the unit. The section.

WN: I see. And you were there as an interpreter? You know, MIS interpreter?

GA: Not really, I didn't do very much . . .

WN: It sounds like a law thing. (Chuckles)

GA: I didn't do very much interpreting there. It was more amongst our people and see what you can do. You know I was not too much involved in the work there. I was there for a short while and we talked more about the policies and what we wanted to do. What our role was. There were people who were there before us also. But the group that came when I was there, we talked about what our role was and what we wanted to do, what we felt ought to be achieving.

MK: So whom would advise you folks? Economists? Government planners? Who were these individuals?

GA: I don't recall anything. I think we knew what our responsibility was and it was to break up the *zaibatsu*. We knew that was our goal. I think nobody really knew at that point what to do and how to go about doing it—what we had to do. Because that was one year after the war and it took a while for the American government to go and get the occupation moving there. And to set up the various kinds of units there. To identify what kind of thing needed to be done. I suspect that when I got there, the effort to break up the *zaibatsu* was not something that had been there for a long time.

MK: And you were there for about two months?

GA: Mm-hmm.

MK: How did you get news that, "Okay, you can go."? That you're going to be discharged.

GA: Because all the people who had been there as long as I was, were beginning to go home. Not just AJAs but everybody else. It's the length of service that determines when people are going home.

WN: And they asked you if you could re-enlist so that you could continue the work?

GA: Yeah. The people that was there they told me, “Hey, you could re-enlist. You can continue to stay here.”

My response was, “But I want to get back to school. I want to become a lawyer. I want to get back to school as soon as possible.”

MK: So what rank had you risen up to, to that point?

GA: I was a private. We were privates all the way through. You see, when the unit before me—going to school—when they went through two-thirds, all of them [became] corporal, and when they graduated from MIS they got to be sergeants. When our sergeant started, they decided to stop all of that. So privates all the way through. Now when I was at Fort Snelling a few of us had the opportunity to become officers and I know that there was one from our group—he accepted and he went to become an officer. I had that opportunity but I didn’t want to leave the boys. I felt I belonged with everybody—stayed with the boys. And do whatever had to be done together with them. So I never accepted an opportunity to get advanced. We were all privates. We all got started in Japan as privates and we were still privates when we got discharged at that point. I could have had---if I had re-enlisted I think they would have given me maybe at least a corporal or something like that.

MK: So you were discharged November 1946.

WN: You said you didn’t want to. . . . oh, we’re done?

TC: It is noon. Do you. . . .

GA: I’m okay. I’m okay.

TC: Let’s go on.

MK: So when you were discharged what was your homecoming like?

GA: Oh, eat home-cooked food. Eat my mother’s cooking. (Chuckles) And all the boys that we were together with all come out—discharged at the same time. We were looking forward to getting started in school in February.

WN: Were there any parades? Parties?

GA: Oh, lots of parties.

WN: What about a parade? Any kind of special homecoming?

GA: No. No parade. Lots of parties, in fact that’s the reason why I decided to leave University of Hawai‘i. Too many parties. And fights. The first time I came back from Michigan State I was not at the university yet but we had a picnic. Hale‘iwa Park. I was with a friend of mine, off to one side we were talking. Blackie Tanonaka was one of my very close friends and all of a sudden we heard a lot of noise so we ran where the noise was. All the fights between university and this group. Look at the university boys and look at the other group, at the Kauluwela School gang. I knew all the boys from Kauluwela

School. They were people that I went to school with. And I didn't know what to do. Well, I didn't want to go fight with somebody I knew. So I picked up somebody who I didn't know and who was part of the group. Then I heard my friend Tom Ebesu who became my campaign manager. He was my best man. I saw Tom and he's turning people, [he said], "Hey guys stop! Hold it! Hold it!" Stopping them.

That's when I thought to myself, "What am I doing jumping in a fight like this?" Just because I was a university boy. Tom was with the university boys too, and he was trying to break it up. I felt really ashamed of having jumped into the fight. I went up to Tom and tried to do what he was doing, breaking it all up.

Then, after the fight was all over we came back to the university and we were told that the Kauluwela School gang people were going to come to the university. So Tom and I and Blackie, we went up to Kauluwela School to see the boys and talk with them and apologize about what happened. We didn't know what had happened, we didn't know how it got started. We apologized, we told them, "You know those university people, we don't want anybody to get into trouble to get into a fight and they're going to get very serious consequences." So we begged them—asked them—to not do anything further. To let it go and to accept our apologies. And they did. They never came back. We never had any trouble after that. But we had to go back and tell our university boys how serious this could have been. How they got to behave and not get into this kind of fight.

MK: Were those university boys mostly veterans?

GA: Yeah. There were two guys in particular. They were—they loved to fight. I know who they are, I know their names but I don't want to identify them. But we had spent some time talking to them. They fought before in other places when they were overseas and forth but this is very different now back at the university. And very serious consequences. We told them, "You know the Kauluwela School gang. You folks got into fights. You haven't seen the gang yet. You haven't seen what they can do. They could come up and be very mean. We should avoid that kind of. . . ." So we talked to the two boys who we felt were very pugnacious guys. Blackie was a tough guy. He was a very good boxer. Tom Ebesu was very strong. He was a good football player. He was 6 feet, 180 pounds, really in good shape too. Because of Tom and Blackie, we were able to talk to the guys about not getting involved in conflicts like this.

MK: With you folks coming back from service, you folks had been away from the islands. You've been to the Mainland. You folks have traveled, seen all kinds of stuff and you folks came back to resume your studies. What was that like for you to try to get back into school?

GA: For me, I was so happy that I could get back and I knew what my goals were. This was part of what I had to do in order to get to law school and become a lawyer. So, I tried to study hard. (Chuckles) The parties and drinking that were going on, I just felt it was the wrong environment for me to be in.

WN: We talked to some other vets who went through all of this combat or things overseas, saw the world. And then coming back to Hawai'i and going back to the university was kind of boring for them. Did you feel that way?

GA: No. I was excited about coming back. Being able to pick up my education.

TC: Were you aware, Governor, of you know you had participated in these conversations with the Emergency Service Committee when you were a high school student. So you were much younger and there's a big gap in terms of experience. But you had heard discussions of their concern for the returning veterans and for the shape of Hawai'i. When you came back, did you feel any of their ideas in action? Or was it not there?

GA: No. My only thought was myself. What I had to do in order to become what I wanted to become. My feeling for the community really started to come about [later] when Tom Ebesu asked me to go and he wanted me to meet somebody. The somebody was Jack Burns. He wanted to take me to the YMCA, the old Nu'uano Y.

WN: Is Blackie Tanonaka still alive?

GA: No.

WN: He died.

GA: My two closest friends Tom Ebesu and Blackie Tanonaka are both gone. Tom Ebesu died when I was lieutenant governor. He didn't see me become governor so I was really. . . . it really bothered me that he didn't. He was my campaign manager. Blackie Tanonaka died. He was here during the time I was governor, and he died maybe seven, eight years ago. So some of my close friends have passed away. Blackie, Kanji Mashima. . . .

MK: What was Blackie's real name?

WN: Good question! (Laughs)

GA: Teruo. Teruo.

WN: Was he black? Was he dark-skinned?

GA: Dark yeah. But you know Blackie, (pause) and Tom Ebesu. . . . I think about them as being a man's man. Really *otokorashii*, really thinking about things that are very important. Not little things—but don't get 'em angry! (Laughs)

MK: Next interview we'll have to ask you about Tom Ebesu and Blackie Tanonaka. Be interesting.

WN: This is a very interesting day.

MK: Learned a lot.

WN: Yeah.

GA: I'm recalling a lot of things that I had forgotten.

WN: Good, good.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 59-9-6-12 and 59-10-6-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

May 29, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

WN: Once again Governor good morning.

GA: Good morning.

WN: After Memorial Day and we're all fresh and eager to go.

MK: We're going to take you back into time again. We want to know about your Michigan State [University] days. But before maybe we get into Michigan State, I have a question about how come you decided to go to Michigan. Why Michigan and not anywhere else?

GA: I wanted very badly to become a lawyer. That was my first mission. Then I looked at the colleges and at that time people generally ranked [University of] Michigan, Harvard, Yale the three top law schools. I wanted to go to a good law school. Then I understood that there was a program at Michigan where you could go three years undergraduate instead of graduating in four years and then get into law school. So that's what I wanted to do.

When I came back to Hawai'i to go to university—[there was] all the partying that went on. I figured that I felt I had to get away from that. So that's why as soon as the semester was over I made a decision to go to Michigan. I went up without even registering. I went up and I was told out-of-state registration was closed at Michigan. But they told me it's open at Michigan State. Michigan State had the same program, you go three and. . . . So I enrolled there and then I decided that instead of spending my years at Michigan State in the regular course, I took heavy, heavy course [load] so I completed my two and a half, three years remaining—I completed that in a year and a half. Then I came back and applied to Michigan in the meantime and I got accepted.

MK: When you were at Michigan State what did you major in?

GA: I was a history and political science major.

WN: What caused you to go into those two majors?

GA: I don't know. (Laughs)

WN: Anything going back to McKinley or anything like that? Things that you were interested in at McKinley or anything like that that caused you. . . .

GA: No, I didn't have any historical background. But I guess I felt that maybe becoming a lawyer—important that I have some history but more important the political side.

MK: When you were there were there any professors who made an impact on you?

GA: There was a professor and I'm very terrible with names now. Professor, he was a German person. He had a very strong German accent. He taught international law. I took that course and I was very impressed with that man and [what] especially impressed me was his very strong feeling that you can't exist as one country. That so much happens no matter what kind of country you are, so much happens by what happens in other countries.

That made a big impact on me. Even after I became governor, I felt very strongly about the need for us to become more international. By "us" I mean mainland United States but especially Hawai'i located where we were. The economy had to be very international. So I pushed that very hard when I was chairman of the Western Governors Association.

MK: So this professor that you're speaking of now was a professor at Michigan Law . . .

GA: Michigan State.

MK: Oh, Michigan State.

WN: Undergraduate.

I'm wondering if you had your heart set on going to Michigan and you found you couldn't go there because of the enrollment situation so you went to Michigan State, was that a disappointment for you?

GA: In a way yes, but not really, because if I had applied earlier, before I left, I might have been disappointed I was not accepted there. But, because I didn't apply and just made a very sudden decision to go out I understood that they had rules and one of those rules was they're going to close registration application at one particular time. And I got there too late.

WN: I know a lot of Michigan people sort of look down at Michigan State. They called it "Moo-U". Have you heard that term?

GA: (Laughs) No. The one that I heard was, "Four to five girls are pretty and the fifth went to Michigan."

(Laughter)

GA: That one's Michigan State.

WN: Michigan State. That's a Michigan State joke about Michigan, okay. I was wondering . . .

GA: I never said that publicly after I went to Michigan.

(Laughter)

WN: When you went up to Michigan to try to get enrolled, was that common at that time to not be accepted anywhere and just go up there from Hawai'i for example?

GA: I really don't know. But in my case I just made the decision because I felt I should get away quickly.

WN: It sounds like a really bold move to do that. Did you feel that way at the time? Like, "What am I doing?" or anything like that?

GA: No. I felt very confident. I felt this is the route I got to take. I got to go up and go to Michigan, and when I got there I found out I couldn't register. Too late. Michigan State was not a problem for me. By the way, I really enjoyed my years at Michigan State.

MK: Were there any Hawai'i people at Michigan State?

GA: About seven of us. There were maybe at that time one hundred Michigan students from Hawai'i.

WN: When you go up to a Mainland college and you enroll in the dorms and so forth but because you weren't enrolled, where did you stay in the interim?

GA: I stayed in the dorm. I was able to. I got into the dorm.

MK: Earlier you were saying that if you had stayed in Hawai'i at UH, you had all these guys partying and everything and you felt this need to get away from that. Was it very different at Michigan State?

GA: Yes it was. Because I think back here in Hawai'i the partying—a lot of drinking. For me it was not a problem drinking because I didn't drink. I recall one time a big fight that we had out in Hale'iwa because people were drinking. I think that's one of the reasons why I felt, "I gotta get out."

MK: At Michigan State there wasn't that kind of atmosphere?

GA: No. Partying, but it was not people getting drunk, yeah?

TC: I'd like to interject a question because. . . . In various interviews I've run across this postwar drinking dominating UH. Most recently with this biographical work I did on Ed Nakamura. He had this group—his army group—and they drank like two, three times a week you know. Ed Nakamura is about as straight-arrowed a person as you can think of but a doctor finally told him he had to slow down on drinking.

GA: Ed Nakamura?

TC: Yeah. (Chuckles)

GA: Oh.

TC: And just like Ed Nakamura, [Katsugo] “Kats” Miho. You know, Eddie Honda. These are like very smart, very controlled people. What do you think was going on? Was there some postwar trauma thing that was like a mass phenomenon? I do wonder.

GA: I don’t know where or when they started to drink. I’m sure they didn’t do that in high school. During the service they must have done a lot of drinking.

TC: Yeah. It was the war.

GA: Yeah.

MK: So the people who were drinking a lot were primarily like 442nd Regimental Combat Team] veterans who served in Europe?

GA: No. (Pause) Some of the people who were with me at the MIS also started to drink a lot. Not every day. Not that often, but every weekend they were drinking.

WN: It was part of I guess the service army culture.

GA: Yeah.

WN: That reminds me, did you get into smoking cigarettes?

GA: No. I didn’t then. I started to smoke later on. When I tried smoking—every time I smoked—it made me want to go to the toilet. (Laughs) I was not a heavy smoker at that time. But I worked a little bit with the boxing team at Michigan State. One day I had a cigarette which was very unusual for me to do, but I had a cigarette and I was downtown looking at a shop. A coach came right up alongside me and he looked at me and that’s all he had to do. Look at me, and I put that cigarette out and I stopped smoking for a while. But I picked up the habit again and it was not until I got elected governor when my daughter [Lynn Ariyoshi] had just graduated from Punahou and she was going to go to school. She was going to Japan to go to school. Sophia University. One night she told me, she said, “Dad, do you have to smoke?”

I said, “No, I don’t have to smoke.”

She said, “Can you stop?”

I asked her, “Do you want me to stop?”

And she told me, “Yes.”

So I said, “Okay, I’ll stop.” And I told her, “I’m going to light up a cigarette now,” and later on—it was almost midnight then. I lit up the cigarette and then I smoked it and I put it out and it was then—that’s my last cigarette. I’ve never had to touch a cigarette since then. That was July 23, 1975. (Chuckles)

WN: Wow. You remember the date.

MK: So you could just stop, cold turkey?

GA: Uh-huh.

MK: Going back to the postwar period and you have these returning vets at UH. They're drinking and they're partying. What did you think of all this? The behavior.

GA: I was concerned. I was concerned—it's not just drinking but it would lead to other things. Fights and disorderly behavior. At one time out Hale'iwa when I went with the university boys and they had a big fight out there with the Kauluwela gang. That kind of thing made me feel that it's not too good to be around when people drink so much.

MK: Did you feel that if you did stay you would just be drawn more and more into that kind of thing?

GA: I was not concerned about my drinking, but you know when I was in the service, every time we went out on pass and people started to drink, I had to be the person to bring them back to camp. I just felt that I was going to be involved in that. Even though I was not drinking, I'd be there long hours at the parties so that I could take care of my friends and bring them home.

MK: You mentioned a little bit about life at Michigan State. Today you mentioned a little bit about working out with the boxing team. What else did you do up at Michigan State?

GA: When I couldn't get admitted because registration closed in Michigan, I went to Michigan State. I got accepted. I decided that I was going to stay there. So I worked in a construction job. I had no experience doing that but I worked and I learned things from my father. A lot of common sense in doing things. I became very helpful in the construction job. Working with carpenters. Working with engineers.

For example—and this is my geometry part—I saw them trying to draw a straight line on a road. Putting a divider they're going to put in. They put, I guess it's kind of a rubber thing so that it expands and contracts. They were going to put that in and they wanted to be as perpendicular as possible to the side. They would go and mark and go back and forth and try to mark. I told them, "You know how to do that? Take ten feet and ten feet here from center. Ten feet and from there you take twelve, fourteen feet and just mark it up like that from both sides. That line, it's perpendicular." They wouldn't believe me.

(Laughter)

They tried it and then engineer came along and, "Hey that's right. That's very accurate." One day one of the carpenters forgot his square. They were trying to square something off and I told them, "Three, four, five."

"Hey what do you mean 'three, four, five'?"

I said, "Three here. Four here, and five. That's a triangle with a right angle." So it's that kind of thing that I learned—picked up.

They were trying to drive stakes to do a line like this with string stretched across and that's level that they're going to pour the concrete up to. In order to do that they had to put a stake down. On top of that put a pipe—about inch and a half of pipe. So the top of that inch and a half had to be level with the string. They would pound and measure whether it was an inch and a half. Pound, inch and a half sometimes too much, so they got to bring it up. . . . I told them, "I know how to do that. Turn it upside down—the stake upside down—and you make a mark there. That's the distance and now you measure off inch-and-a-half and make that mark and you pound it into that level and you don't have to keep on with that." I enjoyed working at the construction site.

WN: This is at Ann Arbor?

GA: No. At Michigan State.

WN: Oh, at East Lansing.

MK: How did people react to you—you know—working with them?

GA: Oh I enjoyed working with them and they appreciated my work. In fact some of the workers told me, "Hey you don't have to work so fast." I was so fast and shoveling, shoveling. They would tell me, "Slow down, slow down." (WN chuckles.) So I enjoyed that two, three months I had working at Michigan State on the construction job there.

MK: How come you went out for a construction job and not like an office job?

GA: Because that was available. I read about it and I just applied. I was a laborer, not a skilled worker.

TC: I'm curious. I've worked on construction quite a bit as I was growing up. What was the ethnic makeup of these construction gangs? Were there ethnic gangs? What was the ethnic makeup of the construction workers?

GA: They were all whites. I don't remember a single black person. I was the only Oriental. (Chuckles)

TC: So when I worked on construction. . . . fifteen years after you did. I worked with all-white gangs and they were rough guys. They were—I think some of them you know like very racist. You didn't--this all worked out though?

GA: Yes.

TC: You didn't run into—it was okay though.

GA: Yes, I had no trouble with them.

TC: Interesting.

WN: I was thinking that too. Did you identify yourself as Japanese or Hawaiian up there? Did they look at you as being Japanese?

GA: I think they looked at me as being Japanese from Hawai'i.

WN: The fact that Michigan State was at East Lansing, which was the capital, did that affect you at all in terms of course work or anything like that? A way of thinking in terms of government or politics at all?

GA: No. I was just a student and I concentrated on my schoolwork.

MK: You mentioned there were about seven from Hawai'i at your time? How close were you folks?

GA: [Ryoji] "Bull" Namba—he was a professor. He came back and he was with us. But he was older. Ed Ching always talked to us about how he used to wrestle—leg wrestle. He was strong. His legs were really strong. I tried it with him and my legs got sore leg wrestling with him.

WN: What is leg wrestling?

GA: They sit down like this and put their feet down. It's like arm wrestling. You use your leg instead. Your legs got to be strong.

WN: Oh, you hook each other's legs.

GA: Yeah. The other side make you try to push and they try to push that way.

WN: I see. I never heard that.

GA: There was a good boxer from Hawai'i. The name will come to me later. He got his PhD in animal science I think. He was working for us at the ag[riculture] department. He was bantamweight champ at Schofield.

Glenn Oda and his wife, Margaret Oda were there. We used to go to their house. They have *chazuke*. We'd eat rice.

And Tadashi Tojo. Tadashi Tojo and Irwin Tanaka. Tadashi Tojo was an ag major and one day we were invited to go the Odas' for dinner. He said he wanted to stop by the ag department. So I didn't know what we were going to do. I thought maybe he had forgotten something so we were going to stop by. We got there and I'm watching him and he's got this long hook. He was trying to hook a chicken. When he get that thing—even before he catches the chicken it makes a lot of noise. I said. "Tadashi, what are you doing?"

He said, "This is going to be our dinner tonight." (Chuckles)

I said, "Tadashi, what if you get caught trying to steal a chicken like this?"

He said, "Oh no no. Everybody does that. So it's okay."

(Laughter)

So he hooked the chicken and then we start to get off and the chicken made a lot of noise, so Tadashi know exactly what to do. He just grabbed the head and twisted the neck (GA makes a whacking sound).

WN: Cracked it?

GA: Twisted it. Didn't separate but he cracked the neck and the chicken stopped.

WN: Where was Tadashi Tojo from?

GA: From Wai'anae. Initially Kahuku but he ended up with a chicken farm in Wai'anae after we came back.

Irwin Tanaka—I was walking on the street and I saw this guy and he was kind of kneeling down like this. When I came up he put his hands in his shirt—he was wearing an aloha shirt. His first question to me was, “Well, you know my brother.”

I said, “Who's your brother?”

He said, “Oh, Bobo Tanaka.”

I said, “Oh yeah Bobo and I were classmates at McKinley.”

He said, “Oh yeah that's my brother.” So that's Irwin.

Dan Kong. Dan Kong who became a pastor at Olivet Baptist Church. He was at Wahiawā. He was the one who took me down to—I think they call it Georgetown. I think it was someplace in I think Tennessee. I'm not really sure. But he wanted very much to convert me. He took me down to there, and I was touched by the people who were there and I got to like the people. They were very nice. But that's all it was.

MK: So he took you down to Tennessee to. . . .

GA: I'm not sure if it was Tennessee or not but I think the name was Georgetown. The name of the school was Georgetown. It's a Baptist college [Georgetown College in Kentucky]. I just recently saw an ad and a picture of a very old person. At that time he was one of the really up-and-coming young Baptists.

MK: So these were the people from Hawai'i that you kind of knew at Michigan State?

GA: Yes.

MK: And like you mentioned that you used to go to the Odas' for *ochazuke*. How close were you with that couple?

GA: Well, Glenn and I were at Minnesota—Fort Snelling together. So we were in the service together and so when I went up I didn't know Glenn was going to be there. But he got married and he went to Michigan State. They were staying in the trailer dorm—trailer village.

WN: Was Margaret going to school at Michigan State also?

GA: Yeah. [Margaret Oda received a master's degree in mathematics at Michigan State University. In 1977, she received a doctorate in education from UH-Mānoa.]

WN: Oh she did.

MK: This Ed Ching that you mentioned . . .

GA: Eddie Ching.

MK: . . . what did he do later?

GA: I lost track of him after I came back.

WN: Was there a Hawai'i club? Was there a club at Michigan State?

GA: Not at Michigan State because it's too small. We were only seven of us so we got together frequently.

MK: When you were majoring in history and political science you said, were you required to write a thesis or a major paper to get your undergraduate degree?

GA: No.

MK: Besides that international law professor, were there certain classes or anything that you found really interesting?

GA: Yeah, my history professor. . . . and again I can't recall his name. But he was very interesting to me because he came from the South. He has a southern drawl. You know some teachers you immediately feel kind of closer to. That's how I got to feel with him. If you ask me why I couldn't tell you why, it's just that's what happened. I think there was a natural draw to him.

TC: What aspect of history did he teach, Governor?

GA: A lot of it was American history, but much detailed. History you can teach history from the very beginning and all the things that happened. Or, you can put emphasis on some things that happened during the course of that period and talk about what happened and why it happened and kind of talk about maybe could, would it have been done very differently. And how much do the people who write the books—how do they lean, how much do they feel for or against the things that happened?

MK: When you compare the way you were learning history at McKinley to how you were learning history at Michigan State, how would you compare it?

GA: I think at McKinley it was more what happened when the country was formed, when they came to America the country formed, and all the events. It was a sequential thing. That's what we learned so we could really understand what had happened in our country. But very different from the way we began to teach it. Do the same thing but came to a certain

- period and started talking about what happened, why did things happen and what could have been if somebody else had different kind of thoughts. It was not just rote history but thinking about events and what could have been, what might have been, who made a difference. That's the part that I enjoyed very much.
- MK: A little bit more critical thinking about history.
- GA: Mm-hmm. And that international law professor talking about how different countries played different roles. But how important it was especially that they come together and work together. He really believed countries have to work together. You can't go independently. That was the kind of theme that his history course. . . . international accord yeah?
- MK: You mentioned that you carried a heavy load. You wanted to kind of accelerate things. How did you manage?
- GA: Well, we had courses at Michigan State that you could take for the whole year or you could take the course for a quarter or two quarters and take the exam for the whole year. If you passed the exam you get credit for the whole year instead of just during the period you were going to classes. So that's what I did when I first got there and I wanted to get as much work behind me as possible. That's why I finished my year and a half when I went to Michigan State. I went there in 1947. The spring quarter of 1949, I was able to get out February of '49. I graduated and in the meantime I got accepted at Michigan, so I came home. I was home for that period from February until September 19. . . .
- MK: So when you were studying at Michigan State what was your routine in order to finish as fast as you did?
- GA: It was signing up with the courses and trying to accelerate and then taking the exam.
- MK: So like your daily routine, what was it like?
- GA: I think I studied harder than most people did.
- MK: When I read through Tom [Coffman]'s book there are passages where he wrote about the hours you spent at work [during your time as governor]. Staying at the office very late. Bringing home work. And again, staying up until one, two [o'clock], whatever, so I was curious when you were an undergraduate how you managed your work routine.
- GA: I think I'm a fast worker. That's why even when I decided to practice law I never worked long hours at the office. I kept time, especially when I had my family growing up. Five o'clock, time to leave and I went home. I very seldom worked at night except maybe when I'm in the midst of a trial and there were some things that I wanted to pick up on. I never did any work at home. For me when I got into the doors of the house, home was a place where I wanted to—it was for me to relax. I separated the relaxation space from my work space. If I had any work to do I went back to the office to do that. I put all the kids to bed when they were younger, after they went to bed I'd go down to the office for a few hours to work. But that happened very infrequently. I tried to finish my work on time so that I could go home. I think sometimes lawyers can waste a lot of time.

(Laughter)

They can waste a lot of time doing things maybe they don't have to do. You know I can waste time now and somebody can say I waste time because it's not work-related. But it's work that I enjoy doing. So it's very different. I think when you start to feel when you start practicing law at the very beginning, you can put in a lot of time—extra time—that maybe is not necessary.

MK: So you are pretty efficient.

GA: I think I am. Yeah. I think I am.

WN: So in college you weren't one of those crammers. You didn't cram the night before—pull all-nighters.

GA: I did too, but I didn't feel that I had to cram and it was kind of last-minute review for me.

WN: So you seem to be a very organized student.

GA: Yeah, I think so.

MK: What was involved to apply to go to Michigan Law School in those days?

GA: (Pause) Michigan State I just got there, applied, and Michigan. . . . I just applied. Sent my. . . .

WN: Were you still considered out-of-state?

GA: Yes.

WN: You were. I'm wondering when you were going to Michigan State did you go home for summers or you were there for the whole . . .

GA: No, I went home. Summers I came home. In fact it was my last summer home in 1951 that my father told me for the first time that he had jumped—he had not gone back on the ship so he made an illegal entry to the United States.

MK: When you graduated from Michigan State—your undergraduate graduation—did you go to commencement and were there people there for you?

GA: No. (Pause) No, because I left Michigan State in February—early February—and so I made arrangements to come home. I picked up a car—not my car but they had at that time in Detroit, if you drove a car to San Francisco they would give you fifty dollars to cover gas. Fifty dollars was enough to cover gas to San Francisco. You turned the car in at the dealer there so it was a free way to get to the West Coast.

MK: And from there you came home.

GA: Uh-huh.

MK: Then you went back to Michigan for law school.

GA: Yes.

MK: What was it like for you at Michigan Law School?

GA: I found at law school for every credit we probably put in two, three hours more than we did in undergraduate school. Every student at Michigan, they really studied hard. After school was over—class over—go to library, study. My guess is we took about three credits every day. So for three credits we probably put in three times that amount studying. For every one hour of class we put in three hours studying. That's the general pattern in law school. I don't know what it is now but our time that's what it was.

MK: How difficult or how easy did you find the work?

GA: I didn't find it difficult but I didn't find it easy either. We spent a lot of time—the Hawai'i boys—we spent time together. We talked about what we heard in class, our discussions that took place. The cases we read and we discussed those cases.

MK: Who were the Hawai'i boys?

GA: My classmate was Yoshiaki Nakamoto. Tonsik Pai.

WN: Excuse me who was that?

GA: Tonsik Pai. T-O-N-S-I-K. Pai. P-A-I.

WN: Oh, okay.

GA: Henry Wong was there. (Pause)

WN: These were all law students?

GA: Yes. Art Fong was one year after me. Tamura—the Tamura Market in Wai'anāe. (Pause) I'm thinking of the other person whose mother was a very top-flight insurance agent. Japanese.

MK: Not Takushi?

GA: Takushi.

MK: Takushi?

GA: Roy Takushi. (Pause) Bill Amona. (Pause) Isao Ito.

WN: Quite a few.

GA: Oh, Isao Ito, Art Fong were one year after me. Henry Wong. . . .no. Henry Wong I think his name was, was one year before me. Ashford. Clinton Ashford was one year before me. So Nakamoto, Tonsik Pai, Roy Takushi, and Bill Amona were my classmates.

MK: Did you folks form like a study group or. . . .

GA: Yeah we all went to the library. Without making any plans or what was going to happen. After class was over we all walked over to the library. It was the same building anyway. Walked to the library and went in and that became our routine. Every day we did that.

MK: You know we have a son who recently finished law school. First year was real tough and at times he was kind of scared and worried in class to be called upon. How about in your case?

GA: I was never concerned about being called upon but I remember my contract professor one day when I was in second year, he told me, "You know I have a student in my class and I think he's from Hawai'i. I try to call him and every time I call him he doesn't answer me."

I said, "Who is that student?"

He said, "Inging? Ingu? Igu?"

So I tell him, "Oh, that person's named N-G. His name is Ng. Not 'Ngu'."

(Laughter)

WN: Oh, "N-G", I see.

GA: So the guy he said it's a good way for him to ignore the professor.

(Laughter)

Then, I heard. . . . Student who proceeded me—a graduate—I was not there. He's from Kaua'i. Japanese person. He was part of the 442 and he became attorney general under [Governor] Bill Quinn.

WN: From Kaua'i?

GA: Yeah, Japanese person. I cannot think of his name. But he's a rugged, tough guy. There was a story circulating about him. He was an injured veteran and had metal in his legs. He was cold all the time. At a cold time when somebody opened the window he'd go there and close the window. After he closed the window somebody opened the window again. He did that several times—he had to go close the window. One day in the middle of the class he stood up and he said, "Fuck you. Whoever you're doing that, you want to get the cold so much, go outside! I have metal in my legs and I get very cold and I can't stand it!" So he yelled out like that and after this nobody opened the windows.

(Laughter)

GA: What was his name now?

WN: Attorney General under Quinn.

GA: Attorney General under Quinn. Japanese person.

WN: I didn't realize . . .

TC: [Michiro] Watanabe?

GA: No. Before Watanabe.

WN: [Bert] Kobayashi. Not Kobayashi. Well, we'll find out. [It was Jack Mizuha.]

MK: What a story. What a story. Then when you were at Michigan were you already thinking about what kind of law you'd like to go into?

GA: No, but I wanted to go into private practice. At that time we were talking about if you can make \$10,000 a year we're going to be okay.

WN: Was that a good amount?

GA: It was at that time. It was a very comfortable amount. When I came back, Fred Patterson's secretary was a good friend of my uncle. So when I came back my uncle tell me, "Go see Louise Cordes."

And I went to see her and she told me, "Come in to see Fred Patterson." So I went in to see Fred Patterson and he talked to me about what I wanted to do and I told him I wanted to be in private practice. Didn't want to go work government.

He told me, "What kind of work do you want to do?"

I said, "I'd like to become very proficient in trial work. I'd like to be a trial lawyer."

Then he asked me, "What do you expect to get paid?"

So I looked at him and I told him, "Well, you know I went to law school and it cost me money to go to law school. I don't feel as though I am a complete lawyer yet. I don't have any experience in practice. If I can be here for a while I'd be willing to do this without any compensation."

He looked at me, he said, "You mean you're telling me that you're willing to come work for free?"

I tell him, "Yeah, because I want to get the experience."

He said, "Oh no. You're not going to work for me for free. Son, I like that attitude." Then, he told me, "You come to work." So he started like work for \$150.

My first day in the office he told me, "Go down to district court and introduce yourself and tell them that you're a dumb son-of-a-gun. You are practicing law with Patterson but you need a lot of help. You don't have any experience. So you go and do that." So I went down there and didn't tell them I was a dumb son-of-a-gun but I told them I was working

with Fred Patterson and that I would be coming around. It was the very best advice I could have gotten.

After I went there and talked to them, every time I went there to try and find something in the book, they tell me, "Hey, don't come. Call us. We can get the information for you." I did the same thing at circuit court. They were very good to me. Made it easier for me to practice law.

MK: What was the connection? That you got an introduction to Fred Patterson?

GA: Yeah. My uncle knew Sonny Cordes. Sonny was a Murphy Motors auto salesman. His wife was Louise, who worked for Fred Patterson. She had been working there for thirty, thirty-five years. She was so good even though she was working as his secretary. If they needed to draw some documents up like a deed or will or whatever it may be, he just told her, "I want a will," or, "I want a deed," and she put it all together.

MK: How big was the firm?

GA: Just one person. At one time he was a great criminal lawyer. The criminal lawyer people used to talk to me about how he was really outstanding as a criminal lawyer. By the time I got there, he was not doing very much trial work but doing all the business consulting. He was the one who started Pacific Insurance Company. He was one of the founders of Pacific Insurance so when I went to work for him he had me doing a lot of automobile accident cases. I immediately started to get a lot of trial work.

Then, because of his criminal [law] background he was very close to Henry Awa Wong. Henry Awa Wong at one time had a liquor store on Maunakea and Hotel Street. He was kind of known as the unofficial mayor of Chinatown. Every time we had gambling raids and there were lots of gambling raids—about every two weeks there would be a gambling raid in one of the houses—they would come and bail, twenty, twenty-five bail receipts. Each one maybe fifty, a hundred dollars. Usually bail sheets were twenty-five dollars but because they were repeaters they got a bigger bail. They all signed and come to me and give it to me. They'd ask me to go to court. Every two weeks I did that for almost two years—going to court on gambling cases. I was going to court about once every two weeks. So I probably handled about fifty cases like that.

I was very successful and one day one of my last cases that I handled there were a few people. And what I would do, I would cash the bail receipt after the case was dismissed. I take my fee and bill them and I took my fee from there and give the rest to them. The last case that I handled with them, only seven people, so the bill receipts were much smaller. Instead of \$25 because they were known gamblers, it was \$700. When I gave them my bill I gave them cash and then give them a bill and they looked at it and they say, "Hey, you're taking too much."

I said, "What do you mean by that?"

They said, "Only \$700 and you got to take too much of that amount."

I tell them, “My fee is not based upon how many people got arrested. My fee is based upon what my services to you were.” They told me that they don’t think it’s right. I tell them, “Okay, you tell me what you think is right.”

They told me, “Half.”

I told them, “Okay, that’s my fee. Half. ” I took the half and I told them, “That’s my last case. I’m not going to represent you folks again because if you thought that I was taking my fees based on how much bail receipts was coming back then I’m sorry because that was never my intention. Because you make me a partner in your efforts when you do that,” and I said, “I’m not your partner. I’m your lawyer handling your case because you felt you wanted me to handle it.” So it was my last case I handled for them. A couple of years later the group came back to me again to ask me whether I could handle the case and I tell them, “No, I’m all finished with criminal trials.”

I had one later came to me and I had to. . . . She was charged with prostitution. She came to me because I had done some work—represented her boyfriend in some other case. He brought her in and then he told me that she was arrested for stealing. [He said], “She take, steal.” But after, she told him to go and she is going to talk to me. After he went out she told me that she was picked up for prostitution.

She told me “Don’t tell him.”

I said, “That’s okay. It’s only between you and me.” So I handled the case and we were successful.

She told me when I told her what my fee was, and she told me, “I cannot give you money now but I can give you trade.” (Chuckles)

WN: Give you what, I’m sorry?

GA: She can give trade. (Laughs) So I told her and then the boyfriend came in. I told him what the fee was and he told me that he brought her in so he’s going to cover the fees.

But I was very lucky. All the boys that came back from law school at that time—law exam was tough at that time. I think there were about twenty lawyers who took the exam and only ten passed—about half passed. There was one person—I won’t tell you his name—one person I know who took the exam when I took it, it was his seventh try and he didn’t make it.

MK: What would happen to a person if, you know, you didn’t pass your bar exam? What would they do subsequently in those days?

GA: He never practiced law. He couldn’t practice law. So I don’t know how he was making a living.

MK: When you took the bar exam how did you prepare for it?

GA: We had bar classes here in Hawai’i. The bar association had different lawyers teaching seven different courses. They were telling us that it’s very different from the exam you

take in school. Now they're going to ask you questions that. . . Problems and you've got to solve the problems and you've got to say why, how you're going to solve it. Whether it can be solved or not. Everything was essay.

I got a stiff neck—a bad, sore stiff neck and my friend when I was living out at Kalihi they were one block away on Mokauea Street. Ernest Kimura, whose son still has a city body and fender shop [i.e. City Fender & Body Service]. Ernest Kimura's father—small guy, but tough, tough guy. I made a mistake when I said, "I get a sore neck."

He told me, "What, sore neck? Come down," lie down on the floor. So I thought it was going to be a gentle massage. Boy he put me on the floor and he dug his thumb in my muscle back there. I was really sore. He told me, "Ah, nevermind. It's going to cure you." (MK and WN chuckle.)

It was so sore. I don't know what happened. I don't know whether he really cured me or not. But after that I never complained about having any kind of muscle—backache—in front of Ernest Kimura's father.

TC: We're going to have to . . .

WN: Change tapes?

TC: We'll take a little break and change tapes.

WN: We know you have a story about how you found out about passing the bar. We want to ask you that.

END OF TAPE NO. 59-9-6-12

TAPE NO. 59-10-6-12

TC: Okay, we're rolling.

WN: Tape number two. Session number six with George Ariyoshi. We're talking about the bar. I know you have a story about when you got the news that you passed the bar. Can you tell us about that?

GA: Today I think people get the results much earlier. But in those days it took a month and a half, two months for the results to come back. So I took the bar the first week in October. By the second week in December I had not heard so I thought, "Hey I think I flunked the exam." I got sick and it was between Christmas and New Year's. I got a cold so I was in bed and I was in pajamas in bed. All of a sudden I got a telephone call from the clerk telling me that I passed the bar examination and that I could come in today or tomorrow—anytime you want to come in—to get sworn in. Without thinking about me being sick I tell her, "I'm coming down right away." So I changed clothes. I got down there. Got sworn in right away. I never gone back to bed after that.

MK: You mentioned like in the bar exam in those days it was essay questions.

GA: Yes, and the questions were all case. . . . If a person had a certain kind of thing, they got into a certain kind of trouble and they were charged with certain kind of way, what would you do? We had to make those comments and we had to say why and what the law was along the way. It was all essay. It was all writing about the problem and how you would handle it and what the law was that made you handle it in a certain kind of way.

MK: How long was a bar exam?

GA: Four hours every day. Morning till noon. Five days the whole week. Every morning for five days. Twenty hours.

MK: Was there an oral portion of this exam?

GA: No.

MK: No orals.

GA: No. It was because we were all given a number. Nobody knew that my paper was my paper. It was only a number that they had. The examiner.

MK: Before you went into the exam did you know what the general outcomes usually were when an exam were given? Like X number would usually pass. X number would fail.

GA: During my time, about twenty people took the exam and only ten passed. About 50 percent pass-ratio back in those days. In that group were some people who took the exam three, four, five times. The one person I know took the exam—it was his seventh try when I took the exam.

MK: When you got word that you passed the exam. . . .

GA: I was so happy that I stopped getting sick. (MK laughs.) I got cured.

MK: How soon did you tell your parents?

GA: Oh, I told them right away. I told them right away I passed the exam. My father had a laundry there and we were living upstairs then. So I changed clothes and rushed down to my father. I was going down to get sworn in.

MK: What was his reaction?

GA: He was very happy. He was very happy. But my father expected me to pass. My father felt that everything I did I would be okay.

MK: How did your mother react?

GA: My mother was very happy also. And you know my mother didn't say very much. "*Yokatta. George. Ryoichi yokatta ne.*"

WN: "You did well, George." She called you "Joji"?

GA: Ryoichi. Yeah, Ryoichi.

WN: Backing up just a little bit between Michigan State and Michigan you were home for about six months. You were at 1714 Colburn Street. Did you notice---was there anything different about home, Hawai'i? What did you do during that six-month period?

GA: My father had a laundry [R & M Kalihi Dry Cleaners] so I helped him at the laundry and I delivered clothes for him and tried to pick up new customers for him.

MK: You know your father's laundry was located on Colburn Street in Kalihi, but how wide was his territory of business?

GA: I went out delivering, picking up customers' work, and delivering clothes for him. It was all over Pālama, Kalihi, and Damon Tract.

MK: How did the business work? Nowadays we just go down to the dry cleaners and we drop off our clothes and go pick it up, but in those days how was the cleaners run?

GA: My father---I went out to pick up clothes that needed to be dry cleaned and brought them home. They cleaned it. If you could pick up Monday, Thursday you get delivered. It was three days later to get it, so I used to pick up the clothes. They would clean it and I would deliver it back to the customers. I established a route. My father bought a truck—delivery cars. I went out, picked up new customers. So that when I left for school we had a route established for somebody else to pick it up.

MK: When you say that you would try to get new customers, how would you do that in those days?

GA: I went house-to-house and I tell them that I was—my father had a dry cleaning shop. I would be coming around and if they had any laundry I would be very happy to take care of it. And so my father—I learned from my father—was very good to the children. So when he came and when I came, the children would go running to him, "Oh laundry man! Laundry man!" (Chuckles) They were very helpful.

MK: Even before you got into politics, your dad and yourself already had some familiarity with going to people's houses.

GA: Yes, yes. My father didn't speak English. The only thing he would say is, "Laundry. Laundry." When I ran for office I think he went around with me. The only thing he would say, "Oh my boy. Please *kōkua*." That's the only thing, he would, "Please *kōkua*. My boy."

MK: When he started campaigning for you did he go and visit the houses that he had as clients?

GA: Yeah. He continued to do his work during the day but after work hours he was out campaigning. My father did a lot of campaigning, going house-to-house. He went Downtown at one point with—Chinatown, he went all around Downtown to campaign for me.

MK: Then the laundry shop being in Kalihi, did people come to the shop too?

GA: Yeah. People came and dropped off but in addition to that we went out too. I went Desha Lane and Pua Lane and Robello Lane and all around Kalihi. Mokauea, Kalihi Street.

MK: The cleaner was dry cleaning?

GA: Dry cleaning.

MK: So I'm thinking, "Gee, so people in Kalihi and Pālama, they had stuff to dry clean?"

GA: Yeah, and basically it was trousers. Gabardine. Gabardine trousers. When I think back I'm amazed at how much people sent out for cleaning. It was at that time fifty cents to have trousers dry cleaned. Fifty cents for the jacket, so a suit was one dollar.

MK: Your sister mentioned that your father sometimes would go to homes in Mānoa and also do upholstery cleaning. How was that done?

GA: I think the business was called "Duraclean" and I think today there are Duraclean business but my father had that business franchise. Basically what it was is the cleaning—like carpet—did not make the carpet really wet. It was the soap suds you'd put on there and just cleaned up and because it was not water—soap suds—when you vacuumed it became fairly dry.

MK: So he did that in addition to the dry cleaning clothes.

GA: Mm-hmm.

MK: What was your mother's role in the business?

GA: She worked in the shop, in the dry cleaning shop. She did the washing, put it into the machine. Taking out and put into dryer. She learned how to take out stains—spotting we called that. With a spray gun like this. My mother also did some ironing.

MK: Then would she also deal with customers?

GA: Yes, yes. I remember one person that I picked up I hired to take over my job—the route that I established. When I came back he lost a lot of those customers but he also had big collectibles. He never collected all the monies. So when I talked to him and he told me, "I bring back 90 percent you know."

So I tell him, "Oh yeah you know what you bring back 90 percent so you brought enough for my father to pay you. But what about my father's 10 percent? That's my father's profit and you didn't bring my father's money back." The guy never looked at it like that. He felt that 90 percent he brought back he was doing well. I had to explain to him, "Yeah, 90 percent covered all the expenses, but what about my father's money?"

WN: So while you were doing it you made sure you got a 100 percent.

GA: Yes. I had no problems. No trouble collecting. I delivered the clothes and they were all ready to pay me. I never came across a single instance where somebody told me, “Oh I’ll pay you next week,” or anything like that.

I recall on Akepo Lane there were lots of Filipino peoples. Single, Filipino men. They had a big one or two room and they had beds off on the side. They had a big pole going across and they took their clothes and they hung it up there. That was how they had their clothes all put away.

MK: You really got to see different parts of the island yeah?

GA: Mm-hmm.

WN: When you collected the dirty clothes how was it? Did you have a basket?

GA: No. We just took the leg and tied it up like that.

WN: Oh the pant leg.

GA: Uh-huh. We never had basket. Nothing like that. We just took the clothes—the shirt and jacket and everything was put together. Then the pants we put it in pants and then we tied up the pair of pants.

MK: Earlier when you were mentioning collectibles. It was just on the honor system? You take the clothes, you come back, you deposit it, and they just paid it?

GA: Oh no. I gave a receipt. We had a receipt and so many pants—whatever it was. The cost of it I wrote down and gave that to the customer. The original went with the clothes that I had put together. When I took it home the person who got it would take the. . . . She would take a small cloth and a number on it and she would just staple on parts of the clothing.

MK: A lot of steps involved. (WN chuckles.)

GA: Because of that laundry also I learned how to press. When I went to the army I was very good at pressing. I could press trousers. It came out very nice. Even today I can press trousers.

WN: In the army did you just do yours or did you do others?

GA: My friend, he couldn’t press so I had to go press his and I had a hard time—I didn’t know how to put the buttons on, sew buttons on. So he put buttons on my coats. I think he got the better deal. (WN and MK laugh.)

For inspection we had to be really clean and neat.

MK: So you two always looked good though. (GA laughs.)

WN: When you returned the clothes was it on hangers?

GA: On hangers. With the slip hanging on there.

WN: They would pay you when you would deliver. And you'd give them a receipt. So you were doing this between Michigan State and Michigan for the six-month period and then you left in 1952 to go to Michigan Law School.

GA: Mm-hmm.

WN: Were you coming home during the summers and did you work in the . . .

GA: Yes I was. Laundry yes.

WN: Can I ask how much your father paid you?

GA: My father?

WN: Yeah.

GA: I don't remember getting paid.

WN: You didn't get paid. (GA and WN laugh.)

GA: But they gave me *kozukai*. Allowance. He gave me spending monies.

WN: Plus they paid plus your Michigan Law School tuition.

GA: Mm-hmm. My tuition was—the GI Bill covered it.

WN: Oh that's right. GI Bill.

GA: At Michigan State a quarter was 3 months. I still recall for room and board at the dormitories I paid \$180 a quarter for 3 months. My tuition—out-of-state tuition—was at Michigan was under \$200. At Michigan Law School my tuition. . . . my books were under \$250. My tuition was very close to \$500 I think. So almost all of that was covered by GI Bill. I got \$75 a month. So the \$180 at Michigan State I had after that approximately \$60 a month. So I had \$15 left over.

MK: And you had your construction job for a little while too.

GA: Yeah, right.

WN: Did you work part-time at Ann Arbor? At Michigan?

GA: No. I think law school it's hard for anybody to work part-time. At Michigan State because I carried a very heavy load I put my time into my studies.

MK: I read somewhere that Michigan in those days used to have a Hawai'i club. A big Hawai'i club. Were you part of that group?

GA: Yes. In fact, one year I was president of the Hawai'i Club at Michigan. That was my law school years. We had, I think the year I was president, we had about 130 Hawai'i students at Michigan.

MK: That's large.

GA: Big.

WN: So this is undergraduate and graduate.

GA: Yes.

MK: What did you folks do? The Hawai'i Club.

GA: It was more socially get together. Some dancing. Listening to. . . not the whole club, but there was a group that had an apartment—about six or seven boys that had an apartment. We used to go there often. I remember for one semester I was invited to stay with a person—his father had a Chinese restaurant by McKinley High School at that time on Kapi'olani [Boulevard]. He invited me to come stay with him for one semester. I had good Chinese food and he did all the cooking and was very neat. My job was clean up but he cooked and he cleaned up as he went along. So I had very little to clean up at the end.

MK: When you were at Michigan Law School who were your closest associates?

GA: Yoshiaki Nakamoto who was a bit older than me but he and I got together. Isao Ito. (Pause) I'm trying to figure out. . . I was at the law quad for one semester I think. I moved into a private home one block away from school. The landlord was a very, very nice person. Always cooking and giving us things. I remember Yoshiaki and Isao Ito and Takushi. And [Harry] Tamura. We used to get together for lunch. Our lunch was—somebody picked up a loaf of bread and pork and beans and we had a bottle of jam and peanut butter. So I had a lot of pork and bean sandwiches. (Chuckles)

MK: Those guys came back and took the bar too? They continued here?

GA: Yes. But Tamura, he was younger than me but he's gone. You know, they're all dead. Tamura is dead. Isao Ito is dead. Nakamoto is dead. Tonsik Pai is dead. Roy Takushi is gone. I'm doing pretty good staying alive.

(Laughter)

WN: You said the Hawai'i Club was mostly social. I was just wondering, you're a student going to law school and you're a history and political science major at Michigan State. Was there any opportunity to go beyond just the social part and talk about certain issues in Hawai'i? Anything like that?

GA: No, we didn't have enough time. Whatever time we had, everybody's busy. So it was a job just trying to come together. That one house I forgot who was that person. They had a house there and they had a lot of gambling there. People shooting crap, gambling. In fact, one person I know who was there—he gambled, he made a lot of money. But nobody

paid. He didn't collect his money right away. When he was ready to leave they all came to pay him off. He got enough monies to buy a car to go home.

(Laughter)

But I never gambled like that.

MK: When you were on the Mainland, how much news would you get about things back home in Hawai'i? Say about the 1949 big longshoremen's strike, the dock strike. Things like that?

GA: Not very much yeah. Because my parents couldn't write to me in English. My sister was still young yet. I think it's whatever we might have read in the newspaper.

There was one boy that I really felt sorry for. I used to go to all the games. I used to go movies too. I felt I needed to do that—take breaks. But this one boy he wouldn't go to movies with us, he wouldn't go to the football games, and he spent all his time studying. Especially that second semester before the final exams. Unfortunately he got to the point where he couldn't take the exam. Almost his mind became blank. I felt really sorry for him when I saw him one day sitting down. His name was Abe, [I said], "Abe what are you doing?"

He said, "I'm really in trouble because my mind is blank now. I cannot think." So he did not make it.

MK: Having made law your goal from the time you were a kid in intermediate school, were there ever any times when you felt a lot of pressure or. . .

GA: No, I knew that I had to study hard and we had to put in a lot of hours. We had discussions amongst our group. But I never felt pressure. (Pause) I guess part of it was because I was not interested in getting top grades. I just wanted to study so that I could pass and get home and study—take the bar examination. To me that's the measure, a true test, of what happens to you. When you can pass the bar examination. So I never looked at I had to get all A's. I felt that if I could get well and do well in school, know the subject matter well, be able to talk about them, that's what I wanted to do more than anything else.

MK: That meeting that you had with Fred Patterson, that was before . . .

GA: After I got my law degree and I came back and I was in the midst of taking my bar examination. Oh no, after taking my bar examination.

MK: After, but not after you got the results.

GA: Yes. In between there.

MK: During that time or any time before that had you ever gone out for any interviews or checked out what opportunities there may have been for you?

GA: No, because I was told about Fred Patterson. I was told about the kind of practice he has and that he—I didn't want to become a criminal lawyer but I was told that he had started Pacific Insurance so I would get a lot of work with the insurance company. That happened.

WN: So your connection with Fred Patterson was largely through this Louise. Sonny and Louise Cordes. I'm just wondering what in your opinion, what opportunities were there for a young AJA law graduate in 1952?

GA: If you were going to become a law clerk and those also passed the examination, there were opportunities for us. We knew that we could get a law clerk job. But, from there, from being a law clerk and doing all the legal research for your partners it was another step.

In my case, two years later Fred Patterson died. I had gotten into the legislature in '54 and I met Russell Kono. I got to know Russell Kono well. After Fred Patterson died and after the '55 session, I was introduced to Bert Kobayashi. Bert Kobayashi---And Russell must have talked to Bert and Bert told me, he felt *kawaisōna* for me—felt sorry for me. He felt that Patterson had passed away and I was going to be all alone and he wanted to help me. He asked me if I would come and join them. At the time that I joined them, Alfred Laureta was also looking around and had just joined the group so it was Bert Kobayashi, Russell Kono, Alfred Laureta, and I became the youngest—the last—member of that group partnership.

MK: So this Mr. Patterson, he was an elderly gentleman?

GA: Yeah. Fred Patterson from before the war he was practicing law and he was a criminal lawyer and had a reputation for being an outstanding criminal lawyer.

MK: What motivated him to listen to his secretary's requests?

GA: Because he was very close with secretary. In fact he wanted to take care of his secretary. The property—if you go up Punchbowl and Queen's Hospital and right now there's a parking lot between Punchbowl and that street that goes up. Is that Miller Street?

WN: Miller. Right.

GA: So Punchbowl, Miller, and the freeway. That whole property he and Louise bought that property many years ago, or shortly after that, bought the property for very cheap price I guess it was. Patterson said that he wanted to turn it into money right away. Louise didn't want to sell the property, so Patterson actually gave her the property and she owned it outright. And he said to Louise, "Louise you think about every day you pass the property, you're throwing fifty cents away. That's the money that you can get from disposing the property." But she hung onto it and I think she made a pile of dough when she sold the property.

MK: So he was kind of motivated to help you because of his relationship with his secretary?

GA: His secretary was not only his valued employee but a very good friend. And they invested. Princess Ka'iulani property. Princess Ka'iulani, that property. The whole block—10,000 square feet—he owned it and gave Louise a share in that property also.

WN: You mean Waikīkī?

GA: Waikīkī. So they were more than just—he trusted her and he liked her and they were good friends. In fact one time Fred Patterson used to come put his feet on the desk. Stand the desk in front and put the desk up. One day when I was there Louise looking down she said, “Mr. Patterson, you don’t have your zipper up.”

(Laughter)

TC: Can I ask Governor? You know his Pacific Life Insurance—his interest there—were there any. . . . In my research in before the war and during the war, there were Japanese Americans who were insurance agents who circulated widely in the community because of what they did. They were also quite intelligent. So there were names of people like Masa Katagiri. Yamamoto. I remember those names particularly and there were some others, but were there any people of that stature that you encountered in the course of this?

GA: Yeah, there was a man that I knew: Asato, whose son was a classmate of mine in Japanese school. Asato. And the Takushi lady was very up-and-coming at that time.

MK: So that would be Sadao Asato of Sun Life Insurance?

GA: Sun Life, that’s right.

MK: And Chiyeko Takushi.

GA: Yes. Yes. Oh you know the names yeah? (MK and GA chuckle.) Sun Life that’s an insurance company. One of the Asato boys was my classmate at Hongwanji. I don’t know what his first name was but. . . .

MK: You know this Mr. Patterson, I’m just really curious about him because he’s an older Caucasian man who had a practice here in the island and he kind of took you under his wings and chose to mentor you. What else do you know about him?

GA: That he was very close to Henry Awa Wong and the Chinatown group because of that connection. We were in McCandless Building on the third floor and the Pacific Club was up there above that so I know he loved to go up and shoot pool in the afternoon. He died of cancer and I went to the hospital and when I saw him—he wasn’t in the hospital very long but—he was moaning, groaning. I really felt for him when I heard him like that and saw him in that condition.

MK: Did he have any family?

GA: His wife. His wife was alive and the wife was a little younger than he was. But I was very grateful that he took me in and some of the other people who started off—passed the bar

exam at my time—they were doing a lot of research and doing things, but Patterson sent me to court right away. I started to get a lot of trial experience.

MK: As you did work for him and with him, what do you remember about his sort of teaching you or guiding you?

GA: I would go to him and tell him I have this case and what I have and what I think it ought to be and how he can do it. He would tell me and point out things I should be very careful about. (Pause) I think that he—he came back to me one day and very early and he had connections with the city, with the mayor's office. He told me, "I can get you a job as a prosecutor."

I told him, "I don't think I want to go. Uninterested."

He told me, "I'll give you \$150 now. You're going to get \$450 for prosecutors. . . ."

I told him, "I think I want the experience here."

So he told me, "Good." He liked the decision I made. I think he was really touched when I told him I was willing to work for him for nothing. When he told me, "I won't have you work for me for nothing," but he told me, "Son, I like that attitude."

TC: Let me jump in with a couple of questions. Quite a few AJA attorneys who came back during the [19]50s would tell stories about interviewing with either *haole* firms or—usually like the big *haole* firms and they. . . . Nice interview but nobody ever hired them. There was resentment about this. Some. You attached yourself to a one-man—seemingly a very astute one man, but a one-man person who was his own man or something. Could you talk about the contrast between your decisions and your experience, maybe even your resulting attitude. It seems historically significant.

GA: Yeah. When John Burns first talked to me—when I first met him—and he talked to me about whether or not I had had discrimination when I was growing up. I told him that I didn't have the problem because I was not a plantation child. Then he said, "What about now, now that you work?"

I told him, "Oh now. I see the Big Five in control. The legal firms, the big *haole* law firm very much tied in with the Big Five firms." And so opportunities for those firms were never open to us. They were all Caucasian people who hired Caucasian people. That's what happened. When I talked about the Big Five, I had reference to the Big Five controlling everything, including those firms that were closed to work for the Big Five.

TC: Patterson was outside their sway. He wasn't their. . . .

GA: That's right. He was not part of that group. Patterson, in fact. . . . My first campaign in 1954 after the primary election, the primary election was on Saturday, Monday we had all the Democrat candidates getting together and after that one meeting we broke up into different fifth district candidates, fourth district candidates, senatorial candidates. Fifth district candidate, Charley Kauhane brought an ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] person in there. Charley and the ILWU person talked about

how this campaign is going to be done. We're going to campaign as a team and we're going to have every person pushing each other. We're going to have a brochure—a team brochure—and then they said that's all. Nothing else. I said, "What about my own personal brochure?"

They told me, "No, you can't have that."

I said, "Why? I am going to take my brochure and take one page and list all the Democrats. The five other Democrats."

They told me, "No, we just have one brochure."

That's when I told them, "I couldn't see that."

Charley Kauhane turns to the ILWU person and said, "Oh if somebody doesn't go along, what's going to happen?"

And he said, "We're going to dump them."

I was scared. The first time I had heard about the powerful ILWU. They were very strong in the plantation in Waipahu, Wahiawā, and 'Ewa, Pearl City, 'Aiea. So I was very concerned. But I felt very strongly that if I were not able to campaign on my own and push my own brochure also together with the others that I would not make it. I had a big group. I had a Farrington group and McKinley group. My classmate Tom Ebesu, friends from Farrington [High School]. We had more people than all the rest of the candidates put together. There were thirteen Democrat candidates at that time. I looked at what kind of support they had and we had a huge group.

I guess the ILWU wanted to let me know that they were very important—that they can control things—and if I didn't listen I had to pay a price for it. So that situation continued and every day they would call and see where we are. Two weeks later, middle of the campaign from primary to general, I decided that I was going to go to the meeting and I had a meeting with—I saw Vincent Esposito during that day, on the street. I told him, "Vince, how come? Am I wrong?"

He told me, "No, I think you have a point."

I told him, "Then how come I'm all alone? Nobody supports me. Nobody is standing up with me."

He said, "Well, we'll see what happens." So we went to Vincent's meeting that afternoon. I decided when I went to the meeting that I was going to go to the meeting and stay until four o'clock and at four o'clock, whatever the results were I was going to come back to the office and call the printer and run off my brochure. I went to that meeting and we talked and talked. Four o'clock came and I said, "I got to go back to the office."

They tell me, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "I'm going back. I'm going to call the printers and run off my brochures." Then the ILWU came standing—as I was going to go out he came standing right up in front of

me and he started to swear at me and telling me how much time I wasted. So I looked at him and I swore back at him. I don't use that kind of language now but I can if I want to. I told him, "You think I've wasted your time? Look at the time you have wasted my time. Two weeks have gone by. I only have two more weeks now." And I stormed out of their office.

Then the next day Patterson got a call from Jack Hall [ILWU regional director]. Jack Hall called Patterson and said, "Hey how come that kid is so hard-headed?"

So Patterson explained what happened, and he said, "He is trying to be sure that he can campaign so he can get elected."

Jack Hall said, "Of course! That's his privilege. That's his right. That's what he has to do. My people are wrong, telling him he can't do his own campaigning." So that's what Jack Hall told Patterson. I don't know whether it was Jack Hall talking to them but they came back later on and said, "Okay we'll make a deal. You run your brochures and pass your brochures for this week. But next week, no individual brochures. Team brochures only." I agreed. We had that five or six more days remaining to do that. In subsequent campaigns I met Jack Hall and Jack Hall was always very nice and very cordial to me. My campaign for lieutenant governor, I know that he was also involved and he supported me in that election.

TC: Let me ask one more question. So, Mr. Patterson knew Jack Hall previously it sounds like.

GA: Yes.

TC: And they had a good relationship?

GA: Right, right.

TC: Do you know how that happened?

GA: No, I don't know.

TC: But you know that it had happened.

GA: Yes.

TC: We've left out one important aspect which I was reminded of when you talked about the pool room upstairs.

GA: At the McCandless Building?

TC: Yeah. I know that you were a pool shooter because I think maybe you told me that but you know who told me that was Kats Miho. Kats Miho said, "I used to shoot pool with George Ariyoshi." (Chuckles) Tell us about the pool room and you know you were a pretty good pool shooter right?

GA: Yeah. Well, I never told Patterson that I was shooting pool because he was going upstairs and you know. But when I joined Bert Kobayashi's law firm and from there we went across the street to Empire's second floor and we were shooting pool there. I was a pretty good pool shooter. When Norman Suzuki came and joined me and we went pool shooting sometimes, I'd spot him additional apples. I'd spot him three ball and seven ball and give him fifty-seventy and I still beat him.

(Laughter)

MK: When did you pick up pool? When did you start playing?

GA: We used to play at Michigan. The union building was right across the dormitory and after dinner some of us would go across and play pool there.

MK: When you came back would you join Katsugo Miho and his friends at the Owl Cafe?

GA: Uh-huh. You know. (GA and MK laugh.)

MK: You were part of that gang then?

GA: Yes. We used to go upstairs to shoot pool too. A person upstairs—Chinese man—makes certain kind of shots. I would ask him how he made that shot and he would tell me and explain how he made that shot.

MK: How about Bob Hasegawa? Was he part of your pool-playing group?

GA: No. It was at first Bert Kobayashi and Russell [Kono] and Alfred [Laureta] and myself. We played with a group too. But after a while—short while—Bert stopped playing pool. He started to lecture us about not too much pool shooting.

MK: Did you ever play pool with Fred Patterson?

GA: No. I didn't dare let him know that I played pool.

(Laughter)

WN: What was Fred Patterson like? What kind of hobbies did he have?

GA: I know he played cards and pool. In the afternoons you never saw him around but he was around in the club upstairs.

WN: This club is—what club was this?

GA: I think they called it Pacific Club.

WN: Is it the same Pacific Club that. . . .

GA: No. Different people.

WN: Oh, another Pacific Club.

GA: It was on the fifth floor of the McCandless Building.

MK: So like who did he kind of associate with? Fred Patterson.

GA: I don't know who came around. I never went up with him. But I guess he played with whoever came around up there. I never had lunch with him. I never went up to the club with him. So I never knew who he was associating with. I knew that there was a group of lawyers and I can't remember their names. But their sons were lawyers also and they were kind of semi-retired and went upstairs also.

MK: Then you told us a story about Jack Hall giving Mr. Patterson a call. So, this Mr. Patterson told you about the whole conversation.

GA: Right. He told me what he had told Jack Hall and what Jack Hall had told him, "Hey, I don't blame that kid. He's right. He has a right to campaign. And he has a right to campaign the best way possible." And my way of campaigning with all the people—there were fifteen candidates in the primary and I came in third. I was third only to Steere Noda and Charley Kauhane. I was third and Vince Esposito came in fourth behind me. Number five was Philip Min, and number six was (pause) a fellow named Lau. He was the sixth person.

WN: Are we ready to start asking about why or how he got into. . . . Can we get into that? You were an attorney working with Fred Patterson and in 1954 you ended up running for the legislature. Can you tell us how you were approached to run?

GA: My friend Tom Ebesu had been involved in "Matsy" [Matsuo] Takabuki's first campaign in 1952. He came up to me and he told me, "I want you to meet someone." So I said okay and I went with him to the old Nu'uanu Y[MCA]. The person—someone—was Jack Burns. I had about a fifteen-minute conversation with him. It was more Jack Burns asking me a lot of questions. Amongst the questions he asked me was, "What kind of discrimination did I face, if any, when I was growing up as a child?"

My response was, "I'm not a plantation child, so I was outside and I didn't feel any discrimination. I had a lot of fights but it was not based upon discrimination as such."

Then he told me, "What about now, now that you're practicing law? What kind of discrimination do you feel?"

I told him, "Well, not personally. But I know of the kind of discrimination that's taking place," because in Hawai'i at that time you had to be part of the Big Five in order for you to. . . . You could raise up to a certain level but you could never get beyond that if you were not a part of the Big Five group. This was true with the lawyers group. Robertson Castle & Anthony, and Smith Wild Beebe & Cades were two *haole* firms and nobody Oriental could get into that firm. They were all doing all the big work the Big Five had. They were all being courted by them. I told Patterson and Jack Burns that I knew that unless you were part of the Big Five, you could not get anywhere.

He told me, "That bothers you?"

I told him, "Of course it does, because I feel very strongly that every person should be able to advance in a community based upon his talent or what his context or what his abilities were. But not only on the basis of you being part of the Big Five."

So he told me, "Run for office." I thought he was looking at somebody else and turned around and he said, "No, you. You run for office."

I told him, "But I'm too young." I just came back from law school and I don't think I'm able to get elected.

He told me, "No, it's not age. This election you're going to have a lot of other young people going to run for office. So you run this election." I left it at that and I went back. Tom Ebesu next day came back. He told me he had the nomination papers all filled out and at that point it was the day before the filing deadline.

I told Tom, "Oh Tom," I said, "I'm not ready to file."

So he said, "Let's go out to Ala Moana."

We went to Ala Moana and we sat out there and we talked about our kid days. About Hawai'i. What it was. We talked about what it was now and what it can be in the future. Then after we talked we came back. We were out there about two or three hours. He said, "Let's go file before four o'clock. Let's go file."

I tell him, "No, Tom. Let's wait until tomorrow." So we waited until the last day—deadline. He came back and then we talked about filing. We talked again. I didn't file until late that afternoon. So by the time I filed it was already thirty days before the primary election. The primary election was not a small district. The fifth district at that time made up about 80 or 90 percent the geographic area of O'ahu. Nu'uana area was the dividing line and completely around the island, Wai'anae, Nānākuli, 'Aiea, Pearl City, Wahiawā, Kahuku, come back all the way down to Waiāhole and Kāne'ohe.

So when I made the decision to file and I filed with only thirty days we had to start from scratch. We had to put all of our campaign things together. We had to put brochures together. Get them printed. Published. We used banners. We had lots of banners that people put on their cars on the back—the trunk. Huge banners about maybe three by four. We had a group that concentrated on making those banners. One group that concentrated on putting up all of our posters. I had posters about one-by-two-foot posters. My parents went out and put up a lot of those posters also. Then we had to concentrate on getting a very simple brochure printed. That's what we used to pass out.

The same brochures I was going to take the cover and put all six Democrat candidates on the other side. That's what they did not want me to do. Did not want individual part of that brochure.

MK: Prior to your running for office, what was your familiarity with politics in Hawai'i up to that point?

GA: I didn't know anything. I had no intention of getting involved in politics and I was never involved in anybody's campaign in a very serious way.

MK: You just said you weren't involved in anybody's campaign in a serious way. But you were involved?

GA: Matsy Takabuki's campaign only through Tom Ebesu. I was not up front with the group but I kind of helped Tom.

MK: When did you become a member of the Democratic Party?

GA: Three days before I filed for. . . . (Chuckles) So now if they had that six-month rule I would not have been eligible.

MK: Who signed you up?

GA: Nobody. I think Tom Ebesu got the card and had me sign it and sent it in.

MK: Who was Tom Ebesu? I mean he's key. Who was Tom Ebesu?

GA: Tom Ebesu was a—he went to Farrington [High School]. He went to Japanese school. The Hongwanji. So I know him from Hongwanji days. Tom Ebesu was a very good athlete and he played football for Farrington. He was all-star [athlete] and he was very good. I always refer to Tom as a man's man. He was an example of what I considered to be a real man. *Otokorashii* you know? *Otokorashii* is *otoko* is man, male.

What Tom showed me one day was, we were at a park in Hale'iwa, a picnic, university group out there and I was out there with them. I was sitting on the side—away from the group when they were dancing—with Blackie Tanonaka. [He] was a very good fighter also. He and I were talking and all of a sudden we heard a lot of noise. Bang, bang, bang. So we ran out there and we saw this group fighting with the university people and I looked and I knew all the guys who were fighting with our university people were Kauluwela school people. Kauluwela gang we referred to them as. I felt I had to also get involved, but I couldn't go after any person I knew so I felt I had to go after somebody that I did not know. So there was one person that I went after I started to fight with and I turn around. It was Tom Ebesu and Tom was right in the midst and he was holding people and he was taking blows because of the punching. He's trying to stop everybody. "Stop you guys! Stop you guys!"

When I saw Tom I said, "Oh my goodness." It was an easy thing for me to do, to join the group and get involved in a fight. But I saw Tom and to me that was the right thing to do so immediately I joined Tom in trying to get everybody to stop. So going to the Kauluwela School people I knew and tell them, "Hey stop you guys. Don't fight, don't fight." Tom Ebesu was that kind of person.

Tom felt very strongly about all the issues. After the election we spent many hours talking about Hawai'i and the kind of things that's important in our state. I talked to him about equal opportunities and for me that was very, very important. The question was, now that I got the power, how do I got about doing this? It was one thing to be able to say

equal opportunities, another thing to figure out how to make that work. I gave a lot of thought about this thing. I talked to Jeanie about it, and Tom and I already talked about this. I came to the conclusion that equal opportunities for me meant not to take away anything that people had at that time but to add on what people had, and to make it possible for more opportunities to exist for more people so they can share in the opportunities. If I decided that I was going to take away opportunities that somebody else had now, and merely turned it over to my friends, I would be doing the same thing that they did and I did not want to do that. So I decided I wanted to create more opportunities for more people can participate in Hawai'i. The more opportunities provided make it more open for people to progress on the basis of their ability. So that became a very important.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-11-7-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

June 14, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

WN: We're continuing our interviews with former Governor George Ariyoshi. This is session number seven. Today is June 14, 2012 and the interviewers are Warren Nishimoto, Michi Kodama-Nishimoto, and Tom Coffman.

MK: Good morning, Governor.

GA: Good morning.

MK: We'll continue our oral history series and we have you in the 1950s. I was wondering, in the 1950s you had gone to college, you had gone to basic training, you had gone to MIS [Military Intelligence Service] school, you served in the MIS in Japan, you finished up college, you went to law school, and you came back. A lot of things had transpired since high school. What was your view on Hawai'i at that time? I'm just curious.

GA: At that time in the [19]50s I was in law school and I graduated in '52. I was very anxious to start practicing law because becoming a lawyer was my lifelong dream and I had made the decision when I was in eighth grade. Even when I was in the service when I was asked to reenlist again—to stay in Japan longer—I opted not to do that because I was anxious to get back and go to school and become a lawyer. So, in 1952 when I became a lawyer I had really fulfilled my lifelong dream. I was very anxious to get started in practicing law.

I happened to know the secretary for Fred Patterson who had been there with him for about thirty-five years. She was almost a lawyer in her own way. She can produce documents. She told me, "Come down and see Fred Patterson." She set up an interview and I went to see him. I told him that I wanted to practice law and I wanted to move into the private sector. We talked about what kind of work that I wanted to do and I told him that I had gone to school and I knew all the legal theories but I didn't know anything about practicing law. For me it was brand new. Still we explored the opportunity. When he asked me about what kind of compensation I wanted, I told him, "I had to pay to go to law school, spend money to get my education. I don't feel my education is complete yet because I need to learn how to practice law. I'm willing to not get paid during that period."

He told me, “You mean, you’re telling me you’re willing to come to work for me for nothing?”

I told him, “That’s right.” Not forever, but I’m going to start like that.

So he told me, “I wouldn’t do that. I would never have you come to work for me like that.” But he said, “Son, I like that attitude.” And I started up with him and I started getting paid \$150 a month. (Laughs)

MK: In those days, was \$150 a month good? Not good?

GA: Well, schoolteachers were getting about that amount. The people in the prosecutor’s office were getting about \$400 a month. One week after I had been with him—he was very close with the people in city hall, so he came to me and he told me, “I can get you a job as a prosecutor.” He said, “It’ll pay you \$400.”

I said, “No, I don’t want to go. I want to stay here because to me this is part of my education, training.” So I stayed with him. I was very lucky to be with him because immediately after I started with him, he started to send me to court. The first day he told me, “Go down the district court and tell the clerks there that you starting off at the law practice and that you’re a dumb son-of-a-gun.” (Chuckles) And that, “You’re going to need a lot of help from them.” So I went down and I told them I was starting off and I would appreciate help, but I didn’t tell them I was a dumb son-of-a-gun. (Chuckles) He told me to do the same thing, go to the circuit court and I did the same thing at circuit court. To me it was so good advice because immediately after I started to go to court, I needed to get information from the records there. Every time I went there they told me, “Don’t come. Just call us. We can give you the information.” They were very, very helpful to me. Over the years they continued to be very helpful, so that was an experience I felt I had really started off my lifelong dream—practicing law.

Until, in 1954, Tom Ebesu came to me and told me he wants me to meet someone. He took me to the Nu‘uanu YMCA and I met Jack Burns. Jack Burns started to talk to me about Hawai‘i and he told me, “What was your experience? What kind of discrimination did you feel when you were growing up?” I told him that I didn’t have any because I was not a plantation child. He told me, “Okay, but now, what do you feel? How do you feel?”

I said, “Now that I’m practicing law,” and I’ve only been involved for a year and a half or so, I told him that I sense the control by the Big Five so much so that you have to be with them if you’re going to make any headway. I remember Bert Kobayashi talking about this, talking about he was working for Lewers & Cooke [Ltd.]. And he worked up a certain level and he just felt he could not break that barrier. So he decided to quit and he went to law school and became a lawyer.

That’s what I talked to him [Jack Burns] about, and he told me, “Good. Run for office.” I turned around and I thought he was talking to somebody else. But he said, “No. No. You. You run for office.”

My response was, “But I’m too young.” I just got back from law school and nobody really knows me.

He said, “No, not how old, but it’s how you feel, where your heart is. So you run this year and there will be some other young people running also.” Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga run in that election. When he was telling me this, it was three days before filing deadline. And, thirty-three days before the primary election. Today there are thirty, thirty-five districts on O‘ahu. At that time we had only two representative districts. The district that I lived in was Nu‘uanu Avenue on the ‘ewa side of Nu‘uanu Avenue completely around back to Kāne‘ohe. So I had a huge district to cover.

Tom Ebesu came the next day and he told me, “Hey, let’s go file.” He had nomination papers all signed up.

I told him, “No Tom, I’m not ready.”

He said, “Let’s go talk.” So we went out to Ala Moana Park and we sat on the wall there and we looked out. We talked for two or three hours. We talked about how we were growing up. We talked about how things were today. We talked about how things are going to be if things continue to go this way.

I told him, “That’s right. I think in my law practice I see that too now. I see a few big law firms and they’re all Caucasians. They control all the big businesses—the Big Five businesses. We have to deal with what’s left over.”

He told me, “Well, you know that’s why we got to do something about it.” We ended up coming back, he said, “Okay. You can file.”

I said, “No, not today.” I said, “Tomorrow’s the deadline.” So I waited until the deadline that afternoon to file and became a candidate and when I became a candidate I now had only thirty days to get a campaign, print all my brochures and whatever else I was going to do. I never even thought about the brochures.

MK: You know until Tom Ebesu took you to that meeting, what did you know about Jack Burns?

GA: I didn’t know anything about him. I had not heard about him. I didn’t know who Jack Burns was. I had not been active in politics, except I helped [Matsuo] “Matsy” Takabuki a little bit because Tom Ebesu in the ’52 election was Matsy’s Pālama Settlement campaign chairman. So, in my own little way I helped Matsy but I didn’t know anything about politics. I had never seen—gone to the legislature to see the legislature in session. So when I got elected the first time, that was the first time I set foot in a legislative hall.

MK: And when you spoke with Jack Burns at that meeting, what were your initial impressions of the man?

GA: I had no impressions of what Jack Burns was—who he was. He was just another person—Caucasian person talking to me about what. . . . But in that conversation I began to realize that he was very concerned about the future and that he had been talking to, not only me, but to many other young people. Try to get them to get interested. He was looking at the ’54 election. Right away, he wanted to see something happen.

MK: When you say that you went to Ala Moana Park with Tom Ebesu and you folks talked for three hours. What were some of the particulars—the specifics—of that conversation? You were saying, “We talked about our childhood. We talked about how it was now and how it might be in the future.” What did you folks say to each other?

GA: You know, we talked about growing up and the kind of things that we did. The schools that we went to, Japanese[-language] school and kind of joking about and having fun reminiscing about what had happened until then. The thing that really I felt about Tom Ebesu was when I came back from Michigan State and during the time I was here—I came back in February—during the time I was here, we had the university night with classmates. We had a picnic at Hale‘iwa Park. Tom Ebesu was my best friend and Blackie Tanonaka was my other good friend. I was off on the side, away from the group. We were talking.

Then all of a sudden I heard a big commotion, so we both stood up and we ran and we got there and we saw this fight. I looked at the Kauluwela School gang people and our university kids fighting. I just felt I had to jump in also to be in with the university boys. I didn’t want to fight with somebody I knew so I would look for somebody I didn’t know and I started to go after that person. As soon as I started to do that, I heard Tom’s voice say, “Hold it, hold it! Stop you guys!” I looked and Tom was there, and he was in the middle. They were pounding him too, but he was not fighting back and trying to break people up.

When I saw that I thought to myself, “Wow, that’s Tom Ebesu. What a man. He’s not a boy, but he’s a man now.” He was there and he was willing to take lickings and just trying to stop, right in the middle. I was really touched by Tom and I told Tom that. “You know Tom,” I said, “me, I took the easy way. I just jumped in. You took the hard way. You tried to stop that. That’s what I realized I should have done too. I learned a lot from you just from seeing you do that.” And I did, I learned a lot. I think it had great impact on my future also. So we talked about those kinds of things. Then we talked about, yeah what about the future? What’s going to happen if the Big Five controls like this? You can’t make progress because it’s not based upon how good you are but your contact being together with in-group. You can get up to a certain level, but you can’t get up beyond that.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: I just wanted to ask you. In other words then—the conversation that you had with Tom Ebesu at Ala Moana Park—it was more than just what he was telling you, it was your regard for him or the fact that you had so much respect for him at that time. Is it safe to say that whatever he told you, you probably listened very carefully and respected what he was telling you?

GA: Mm-hmm.

WN: So it wasn’t just any Joe Blow telling you about the future of Hawai‘i and so forth.

GA: No. And you know, Tom had a motive in taking me to see Jack Burns. We never talked for running for office before that. But what he wanted me to do was go see Jack Burns because he wanted. . . . Jack Burns talked to me and he wanted me to run for office.

When he talked to me about the future this idea of fairness was very important. Tom was a very fair person. No matter what he did—when I think back about him, I think about a person who under any circumstances, he would do the right kind of thing, the fair kind of things. He was a person that I had very, very high regard for. That's why when he talked about the future he said, "What? We're going to live in a community. We're not going to do anything about this and we're going to let them control everything? And let them decide who gets what not based on fairness?"

MK: Where did Tom Ebesu's beliefs come from? What was his background that would cause him to feel that way?

GA: I think at the time that I met Tom—not had this kind of conversation with him. I was away in school, I came back. Tom was back here and he was very close to Yoshimi Hayashi. We call him, "Hash." I think he must have had that kind of conversation with Hash. When you first meet him and you talk to him and you don't think very much about the quality of that person. He's very ordinary. But when you start talking to him, he has very strong feelings about life, about how to go about things and he was a 442nd Regimental Combat Team] veteran. Hash was a person that I appointed to the Intermediate Court of Appeals and I appointed him to the [state] supreme court. At the time that I did it—he's related to Jeanie—and at the time that I did that there were some people who told me, "Hey, are you sure you want to do with Hash because he's related to Jeanie? You're going to get criticized."

I told them, "You know what, if I'm going to do that, then because he's some calabash with me, I'm not going to be fair to him. To me that's the wrong thing." To me, I look at what the person is going to be able to do—what I want that person to be able to do. And it's Hash, right there. He can be that kind of person on the supreme court. It's not just how good a lawyer you are, what kind of decisions you can make, but a lot of it is compassion and how you feel about people in the community. That has to be a background, part of a judge's background. That's why I appointed him.

I think Hash had a great influence on Tom Ebesu during that period. They talked politics. As I indicated, Tom got involved in Matsy Takabuki's campaign and the '54 election he had been involved in the campaign. So I think he got a lot of it rubbed off on him from Hash and from Matsy. Matsy was another person I had very, very great respect for.

MK: This Tom Ebesu—you were an attorney, you were a lawyer. In terms of profession or work, what was Tom Ebesu doing?

GA: He was an insurance salesman. But I also know—it's not only his thinking but I knew that he was a very bright person.

MK: So, this Tom Ebesu was pivotal in your life. Yeah?

GA: Very, very. Very much so. And so much so that his family—Sandy Ebesu, his daughter—was very active in my campaign later on. I stepped in and I tried to help her whenever I could.

MK: Going back to that time, now I have kind of an inkling of what you thought of Hawai‘i back then and your concerns about the future. And I know that when you came back, it’s only, what, about seven years or so after the war? It’s in the early postwar period. I know at that time some Japanese things are again being practiced in the community. You were very active with your father in kind of bringing back sumo and if you can talk a little bit about that involvement.

GA: See, my father only had a third-grade education in Japan. So, with me he used to tell me education is very important. He said, “I only went to the third grade, but for me that was the circumstance I grew up in and I couldn’t do anything about it.” But he said, “You can. You can get a good education and when you get an education, education makes people very equal.” I picked that up. Whenever I talk about education I talk about education being a great equalizer. No matter what kind of family you come from—what kind of background—you have the opportunity to get educated and when you do you can become just as good as anybody else from any other family. From any other groups or place. And so education was one that he stressed very much to me.

But he also talked to me about relationships, and he talked to me about how important it is that you don’t shame your friends. “*Haji o kakasanai yō ni.*” Don’t bring shame on your friends and your family. You got to do what’s right—what’s honorable. That part was always *haji o kakasanai yō ni*. “*Shikkari ganbarenakareba.*” You got to persevere. You got to hang in there. You got to do what has to be done. He talked to me about *giri*, about responsibility. How we needed to be sure that we did what we had to do. We all had a role to play in the family and the community. That’s something that was very important we had to do.

He talked to me about *on*. Don’t forget “*on*” is gratitude. Don’t forget the *on* that you owe to people and so many individuals. I was going through this thing and my father was telling me, “You know Hamada-sensei? Mrs. Hamada? Look at what she did for you. You have to be very, very grateful that one teacher took the time to do so much to help you.” And so, then he told me that no person, however good they are, can ever do things by himself or herself. [He said], “We live in a community where things have to happen together with other people. So don’t ever claim that you did things by yourself. Don’t brag. Don’t boast and say that I did this or I did that. Always acknowledge that there was somebody else that helped you. Maybe you do something now, but remember that what you’re doing here now you can do it because Mrs. Hamada was there. She helped you get to this kind of point.” So he felt that it was very important that I not forget that other people helped in whatever I did.

As I see it became very important to me when I became governor. Part of my success in becoming governor and being there and the work that I did was because my father told me about not bragging. About not boasting. About acknowledging the participation of many other people. I went out and sought the participation—asked for help from many other people. He told me the word that’s very important is “*okagesama de.*” Because of other people helping I was able to achieve.

When I say that it was very important for me—when I first became governor I had that huge deficit [in the state budget]. I reached out. I asked for help. I knew that I couldn't do it myself. I had the certain quality to indicate what I wanted to have done but I had to go and have people help me. So I reached out. I asked for help from government employees. I went to the unions and asked for help—told them what I wanted to do. I didn't want to lay off anybody. I didn't want to make any pay cuts to anybody. But I needed to get their help in order to make it possible for me to pursue that program. Because, if you had people retiring and I don't fill that position the public has to be served yet. And I told them that's what I want to do, not fill that so I can help you not lay people off, not make pay cuts. But you have to help me now to get the resources to make this possible. I got tremendous response from them and they were willing to help me. Even later on when I began to feel in certain places I was not getting the kind of cooperation the unions told me, "Don't worry, we'll take care of it." They went and they talked to these people and told them, "You know why you have a job now? Nobody's getting laid off. Nobody's getting a pay cut. That's because we had an agreement that we were going to pick up and do a little bit more than we were doing before."

When I think back today I don't know of anybody who reaches out like that and who wants to ask for help.

Governor [Linda] Lingle. The first time this happened, immediately she put the schoolteachers on furlough. When she put them on furlough, it's a pay cut for them. It's a reduction in the number of days of school. Every time there was a furlough there was reduced—no education. I often wondered to myself how things could have been very different if somebody had gone to the teachers at that point and tell them, "We need help." They knew that things were very tough on the budget, but somebody had to tell them what kind of help. How can we help, you know? I just wondered if somebody had gone to them and told them, "You have X number of students now. Can you take one or two more students in your class—each class?" That would have solved the financial problems. But nobody asked.

I think that's what I learned from my father. You have to indicate what you want to see done. But, you got to go get help from people. You shouldn't be afraid to ask for help. It's not being ashamed to say you need help. You got to get help in order to do things. It's going to the people who want to help if you tell them—explain to them—what you want to do. That's what Hawai'i people is all about, is feeling *otagai*—mutuality. It's very important so. . . . I credit my father with a lot of things that I did.

For example, when I went to swear in people for boards and commissions, I tried to pattern my boards and commissions so that we would have people come from different parts of the state with different kinds of background—different cultural background, different racial background—so that we get the diversity that exists in the community in each of the boards and commissions. Almost every board and commission swearing-in I took part in because I wanted to tell them why I had appointed them. I told them, "You look around you—when you're board and commission, when you go to a meeting you're going to look around and you're going to find that every person is really different from you. That's by design. Because that's what the community is. I wanted the board and commissions in that kind of fashion, but it would only work if you participate—with your kind of background—you say and you do what you feel you ought to be saying and

doing.” That’s what I wanted to do. [I said], “And don’t hold back and don’t let somebody take the leadership in that group commission and just take you off in one direction. Question whether or not that’s the right kind of direction. From your own perspective, from where you live and your own background and your own culture and your own work experience. Question that kind of direction. From your point of view, put it all on the table. When you put it all on the table, you have all of Hawai‘i on the table, and now we have a chance to make the best choice possible.” That’s what I tried to do. My father taught me how important it is to go and try to get people, the community, our Hawai‘i, the people that we work with. All that kind of people who are willing—if you ask, are willing more than any other state, this state, our people—are more willing than anybody else to listen and to reason and to say, “That’s the problem. You want help. We want to help you. We want to make it possible.”

MK: I guess inherent in that idea of asking for help when you need help is maybe a sense of humility. That you can’t do it all alone and . . .

GA: That’s right. I think some people and some leaders are afraid to ask because they feel that it’s an admission that they can’t do it themselves. They got to get some people to come and help them. To me, that’s not the criteria for leadership. To me, leadership means bringing people together and having them participate and work together. That’s what my state plan was all about. It was not my creation. I thought about getting people together but it was the people who came together and I asked them for help. I told them, “We need help. You look to the future, you’re going to let it come without participating or do you want to be a part of that future? We’re not saying that we’re going to make it all perfect. Along the way we have to make some adjustments. We may make the wrong decisions now about what we want the future to be in twenty-five years, because nobody’s that smart and can predict it that carefully. But, it’s important that we think about it and we try to make that future something that we want to participate in and something that we feel we can make happen.”

MK: I’m going to bring you back a little bit and I was wondering going back to the time you first sought office. You talked with Tom Ebesu. You eventually made your decision to run. Did you also seek the advice of your mom and dad in making that decision? What did they say to you?

GA: My parents told me, “*Shikkari, shikkari yatte.*” That means, try your best. Do your best. Do what you feel is necessary and important. You see, I went through that [19]54 campaign. I got through the primary. We had thirteen candidates, six to be nominated. I came in third amongst the three candidates. Charley Kauhane was first. Steere Noda was second. I was third. [O. Vincent] “Vince” Esposito was the incumbent who came in fourth. The ILWU [International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union] became very concerned about me—a young person coming in not asking for help. I couldn’t ask anybody to help except the people who were close to me. Farrington High School graduates, McKinley High School graduates. We got together. So we never really talked too much to other people except the speech that I had to give when we had rallies back in those days. The ILWU became very concerned that the young person—I was coming without any help from anybody in the group. I came in and I did so well and they wanted to teach me a lesson I think—bring me down and let me know that it was important for them to participate in my election if I’m going to be successful.

After that primary election when we had our Democrat candidates' meeting we talked about people who are in together and helping each other. But we had ILWU representatives in that meeting. We were told—Charley Kauhane took the lead and he said, "We're going to have one brochure. We're going to have a brochure with all six of us. Is that okay?"

And I tell him, "Yeah, that's okay."

"And we're going to pass this out. Is that okay?"

"Yeah, I'm okay. I'll let my people pass that out too."

And then they told me, "And that's the only material we pass out."

I told them, "What?"

They said, "That's the only material we pass out."

"What about my own brochure?"

He told me, "No, because we're going to work together as a team and all six of us are going to get elected."

So I told Charley, "You know Charley, I think I'm the most nonpolitical person in this room because this is the first time I'm getting involved. Looking at it from the standpoint of who I would vote for during the campaign, for me, if you come out to learn six pictures like this—six names—and that's all we go on, I'm going to look at the familiar faces and I'm going to forget the faces that are not familiar to me."

He told me, "No, no. We're going to get elected as a team."

I told him, "I'm sorry. I don't believe that we're going to be successful like that. That's not to say I'm not going to campaign as a team. We'll pass all the material that you want us to pass." I told him, "You know, I think I have a big group. My Farrington friends and my McKinley friends and our campaign group is really big. They're all Indians. They know how to go about campaigning. They know how to go out and pass cards."

Charley turns to the ILWU rep—and I don't remember the person—he turned to the rep and he said, "What are you folks going to do?"

His words were, "Anybody not going to go along, we'll dump them."

So I got really concerned. I knew how strong the ILWU was back in those days. Waipahu 'Ewa, 'Aiea. Pearl City. Wahiawā. Hale'iwa. All those. Waialua. The ILWU was very, very powerful and I became very concerned. But I just felt that I could not give in. I talked to my parents about it, and my father told me, "*Osoreruna. Osoreruna. Ganbatte.* Don't be afraid. You do what you feel you have to do." For me, from that very, very, very beginning my father kept on telling me to do what you have to do. Do what you think is necessary and important. So I never put my fingers up like this to see which way the wind was blowing. I always from that point when my father told me, "Do what you

think you have to do what is right.” I learned that lesson during that campaign very strongly from my father.

TC: Let me ask a question. Could you explain to the future researcher not only who Charley Kauhane was, but the demeanor, the type of person he was. Because, I knew Charley Kauhane when he was pretty much a defeated politician, and yet he was very imposing in that period. I can’t imagine what it would have been like, to be honest with you, to face down Charley Kauhane and the ILWU representative because there was something almost frightening about Charley, and the ILWU also had people—that was the aura that they had.

GA: I think part of it also was because I was so new to politics. And I never had the experience of having to kowtow to somebody, you know? Because I wanted their votes. Charley was a very imposing person. He made no bones about what he wanted everybody else to do. Even during the [legislative] session he had his hands in everything that happened.

TC: And, if you look at the top four. Was yourself and Vince Esposito and . . .

GA: . . . Steere Noda.

TC: Steere Noda. These were all people who were like really, really well known at the time and you were like—who is this young. . . . You’re the youngest. The youngest of the Democrats.

GA: Nobody heard of me.

TC: Right? So that’s the scene.

GA: Yeah.

TC: How did that feel? This young kid.

GA: I guess maybe it was my message. I talked about the Big Five being in control and my whole, my theme, of my campaign was I want to live in a community where advances are made on the basis of one’s ability, not on the basis of who they have to kowtow to, who controls them. That was my campaign. So when I got elected, all of a sudden—it happened so fast. I thought to myself, I’m elected. Now I have the power. What am I going to do? How I’m going to do the things I talked about? So I told Jeanie that I wanted to be off someplace where I can kind of be alone and think about this. We went to Kaua‘i. I thought about the fairness issue. To me, people think sometimes to be fair is to take care of your friends. To me that’s not fairness. I think fairness is sometimes when you’ve got to take care of somebody who’s not your friend. So I made up my mind about what that idea of fairness was going to be for me.

Then I decided, how do I go about doing this now? First, at one point I thought, “We can take all the things that people have now and we can turn it over to our friends.” But I felt if I did that, then I’m going to be practicing the same thing that I was being very critical of. So I decided I didn’t want to take anything away from anybody who had anything.

But I wanted to create more opportunities so more people can participate and compete on a fair and equal basis. That's what I decided I wanted to do. Not change what had happened before, but make it possible for new people to participate in more additional, new opportunities that we create. So, for me, fairness meant take care of everybody, not just your friends. But also, make more opportunities available for more people to participate. That became the central theme of everything that I did.

MK: When you went out campaigning with that message, how did you communicate your message of more fairness, more opportunity?

GA: I think it's first talking to the group that came together. For them to understand why I'm involved in the campaign. I think that message came across very nicely with everybody—Tom's friends and my friends. So we were all eager, gung-ho, ready to go out and work. We didn't know how to go—we had no chiefs so you know Tom Ebesu was a chief and even then his campaign was limited to a very small Pālama Settlement area. But Matsy Takabuki stepped in.

MK: How did he help you guys? What did he tell you folks to do?

GA: I talked to Matsy about this, about the ILWU. Matsy told me, "You're right. You're not going to get elected if you go along with what they're talking about doing. You've got to have your own campaign and no matter what you do, you got to get a big group of people now. Don't let them go now. Hang on to them. Bring them in." And he said, "When you bring them in, it's going to be good for all the rest of us too because you're going to have new people with new ideas. Strong feelings. People who believe in the same kind of things as them are going to benefit from that also." So he told me, "Keep them. Talk to them. Have them go out and vote." Then he told me, "I'm going to assign my brother." His brother was up in Hale'iwa. Waialua. He said, "I'm going to tell my brother to step in and help you in the Waialua area. Some of my people who work in the Waipahu and 'Ewa areas, some of my key people are going to tell them to come out work for you." So Matsy really helped to offset some of that ILWU.

MK: Who else helped you out? You got Matsy Takabuki and his group of people helping you. You've got Tom Ebesu and Farrington gang. You've got your McKinley gang. Who else was involved?

GA: I think that was it.

MK: You talked about folks all being Indians. And young. How come people listen to you folks? You folks are all young! What do you folks know about life?

GA: The fact that I was an attorney. Charley Kauhane was not an attorney. Steere Noda was not an attorney. He was a district court practitioner. Vince Esposito was an attorney. Philip Minn was not an attorney. I think the fact that Vince and I were attorneys I think carried some weight. When we spoke I think we spoke with some authority about what the laws were.

WN: Can I ask you to back up just one more time? After that conversation with Tom Ebesu at Ala Moana and you said that you needed another day to file. Do you remember what went through your mind that evening? What were the pros and cons? What were the. . . .

GA: Well, I didn't know anything about politics and I'm going to step into a political arena that I had no familiarity with. I was thinking, "What am I getting myself involved in? What's going to happen? What's going to happen to my law practice?"

WN: Right. That was one of the questions I was going to ask you. The law practice. Did that come into your mind at that time?

GA: Everything that I did at that time in 1954. . . . In 1969 between Christmas and New Year's when Jack Burns asked me to run for lieutenant governor and he was looking not at my running as lieutenant governor but he was looking at four years hence, running for governor. In 1969, 1970, my concern was my law practice. I was giving up my first love in my work. It was hard for me to give it up, especially when I knew that I was to give up my law practice on a full-time basis completely. I worked hard to build up my practice and I had built it up to the point where I had a very good practice. I was just thinking of bringing together a group of Bert Kobayashi Jr., Jeff Watanabe, James Koshiba. I had gotten together.

WN: This is '69 you're talking about?

GA: Sixty-nine, yes.

WN: The decision to run for governor.

GA: Right.

WN: But in '54, was it an either-or thing? Was it like, "Either I run, or I don't run and keep my law practice?"

GA: No, I could take---in '54 I could continue to practice law because our session was only for sixty days. Very limited the participation. But the thing about it was, it's not just serving legislature and law practice, but you have all the campaigning that had to take place too.

MK: So, what made you say yes? You had your practice. Something that you always wanted to do.

WN: What pushed it over?

MK: What pushed you over?

GA: Tom Ebesu was a very persuasive person. Tom felt very strongly about Hawai'i's future, that something had to be done and we could not let it go like that.

WN: But did you feel you had a choice? In other words, did you think, "Well, I might say no, and what would Tom say if I said no?" Did that come into your mind?

GA: That's right, I was saying no from three days after Jack Burns talked to me. The next day I was saying no yet. It was not until that evening on the second day when I finally began to think maybe. But Tom kept on stressing the importance of the future. What kind of life we're going to be living. What difference it might make if I were to get involved.

TC: Did you have a reservation at that point if you think back about all the cumulative experience and feeling level, et cetera, that there was an issue of the role of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i? You know, that maybe there was going to be too many Japanese candidates suddenly springing up, or on the other hand, like Japanese had been pushed out of office in your memory. You had sat through those ESC [Emergency Services Committee] conversations—Shigeo Yoshida. A lot of background even though you say while you didn't know anything about politics, you knew a lot about the context that really mattered. How was that?

GA: When I first ran I never thought about my racial background and what impact that would have on the political results. Tom never talked about that either. We were only talking about what we had to do. That we can have fairness in the community in order that people that can advance on the basis of ability rather than who they knew. My head was full of that. That's what Tom kept on—Jack Burns was talking to me about that and that's what Tom Ebesu kept on talking to me about.

TC: Did you see Jack Burns as the campaign progressed? Do you remember at what point after you listened to his Nu'uaniu Y presentation, what point does he sort of reappear for you?

GA: Well, I didn't know Jack Burns that well either. His background. I didn't know what else he had done before that—going to university, getting people like Dan and other young people involved. That was something I was not aware of. I was not that close to Jack Burns. In fact in that '54 election when he ran for delegate, I did not participate in his election actively. Jack Burns came to me and told me that he wanted my help. I told him, "Help from me? I'm a brand new candidate. I don't know anything about. . . . I'm trying to survive in this."

So he told me, "No, I'm not asking for your help personally. But I'm asking for maybe, your father." He'd like to get my father's help.

TC: How did you respond? How did your father respond?

GA: My father felt that number one, it's my campaign. But in the process, if he can help he'd be willing to help. He told me the two persons he would help then is Matsy Takabuki and Jack Burns. My father was always—after that first election—always very supportive of Matsy and Jack Burns. Now, Jack Burns didn't have control of the Democratic party, because Tom Gill was very active during that period.

I remember shortly after the election. Tadao Beppu and Tom Gill—there was a conflict between the two for control of the O'ahu Democratic party. Tom [Ebesu] told me I better help Beppu, Tadao Beppu. So we did, but we lost, and Tom Gill won. So after that Tom Ebesu came to me and told me, "This is not about two individuals. So Beppu lost, but that does not mean we're going to be against Tom Gill and the party now. We got to go in

there and we got to help.” Tom and I then decided, “Okay, let’s go see Tom Gill.” We went and we offered to help. I was flabbergasted at Tom Gill’s remark.

His response to me was, “I won. I’m picking up the marbles. I don’t need any help.”

Jack Burns told me to go see Tom Gill after the primary election in 1970. I went to see Tom and I told him, “The campaign is over now and we’re going into the general and I’d like very much to get your help and support.”

His response was, “I was against you folks and I can’t be for you now.”

I came back and I told Jack Burns that and Jack Burns said, “I knew that was going to be his response to you. But I wanted you to go there and I wanted you to get that feeling from him.”

TC: Let me ask you one more question about your father. Did you have any understanding of why Burns knew of your father even?

GA: I think he saw my father moving and how he went without being able to speak English. In that rally he goes to everybody passing cards. The only thing he would say was, “*Kōkua* my boy.”

TC: So he just saw your father’s energy level and how he related to the people.

GA: I think how he made contact on a personal basis. One person to another person. How he made the contact.

TC: He didn’t know that your father was a well-known sumo or. . . .

GA: No.

MK: Interesting how your father would say, “*Kōkua* my boy.” “*Kōkua*” is Hawaiian. “My boy,” that’s how local people talk about their sons yeah? Just *kōkua* my boy.

GA: Very local, yeah? Very local.

WN: He was going out to Waialua and other places too that he was not familiar with—your father.

GA: That’s right. My father went to rallies with me. And he would do that. But during the day he had laundry so he had to work—he couldn’t close the laundry business completely. But he did that and at the same time he tried to campaign while he was working.

TC: Could I ask you about shyness? The subject of shyness.

GA: Uh-huh.

TC: Some people have described you as being on the shy side. I think that I’ve heard you say that once or twice. Were you conscious of sort of working at overcoming some shyness

when you had to push yourself out there to campaign? What was your---Mrs. Hamada said George Akita was going to become the outgoing person who's going to do . . .

GA: . . . become the politician.

(Laughter)

TC: Right. And you were going to be the bookworm. The scholar. So, shyness.

GA: Yeah. I had no problem at coffee hours. Small groups, talking and moving around. My problem was, when I was in a big [group] I had a hard time. You know, politicians going "Hi. Hi." Shaking hands. I had a hard time doing that. I almost kind of stood in the corner and my people had to take me around. Push me. "Hey, let's go talk to somebody over there. Meet that person." So, I had a hard time and I never really circulated around, going around shaking hands. When I go to dinners today, and I'm at a dinner and I see a politician, the people sitting down having dinner and going around shaking hands with everybody I talk to myself that's not. . . . for me kind of rude for them to do that.
(Laughs)

TC: I have to (laughs). . . . Sorry I'm supposed to just ask questions but I have to tell them this story. It comes back to me. In the famous campaign of 1974, one of the complicating factors of his political life was that Dave McClung jumped in and also ran for governor. He was sort of aligned with Governor Burns and confused the scene. I was talking to one of those real politicians—real rough and tumble guys. Leroy Hawley—I think it was Leroy who told me this story. It was like, how do you see this thing playing out? And he said, "I went to the boxing matches the other night, and Dave came in and Dave shook hands with everybody in the first three rows and everybody was glad to see him." He says, "George Ariyoshi came in, and he sat down in his seat and he sat next to about a ten year-old kid and he just sat there talking to this kid. Ariyoshi's going to lose."

(Laughter)

I'm sorry to interrupt. I never forgot that story.

WN: Great story. We're going to change tapes.

TC: That was my change-tapes story.

MK: That's a good story.

END OF TAPE NO. 59-11-7-12

TAPE NO. 59-12-7-12

WN: Tape number two, session seven with George Ariyoshi.

MK: Was that caught on tape? Okay.

You know Governor, you mentioned that a person was killed in Japan when they had that fight [involving MIS men from Hawai'i]. Who was that person?

GA: He was part of the *yakuza*, and I was not there so I'm only relating what I was told that they were at a dance hall. Some *yakuza* people came in and they had a big fight with them. One of the *yakuza* people got killed. One of the persons that I knew very well. . . . I don't know if I should mention names but one person who was part of Kauluwela gang and he was very highly respected—I regarded him very highly as a person. He was one of the seven in the base. But he also became very close to the *oyabun*. I was told the *oyabun* came to visit him in jail. He wanted to know so he could take care of the problem. From what I picked up, there were some people who identified the seven people who were incarcerated at that point. The *oyabun* wanted to know who was doing that, and he would take care of that person.

MK: These people who were incarcerated were all MIS men?

GA: Mm-hmm.

MK: And Vince Esposito went out to Japan to defend . . .

GA: . . . defend them. He got them all off. They all got free.

TC: Why did Vincent go? Why did Vincent Esposito go to Japan? Was it because he was in CIC [Counter Intelligence Corps]?

GA: No. He was asked by some of the parents . . .

TC: . . . to defend? He had been in CIC you know.

GA: Oh, I didn't know that.

TC: Didn't know that. Okay.

MK: You know, back in '54 you were a newcomer to politics. You knew Tom Ebesu. You met Jack Burns at that meeting. Who else did you know?

GA: Matsy Takabuki. I got to know Steere Noda very well during the campaign. Steere was quiet, he didn't say very much. But he would always come to me and say "hi" to me. With that generation, saying "hi" you could tell whether or not that person was your friend or not.

WN: Was Steere Noda part of the ILWU slate?

GA: No. Well, yeah. He was always endorsed by the ILWU. But his daughter—Lillian Yajima—was very active. That's why I mixed with them. Lillian and Steere at the campaign. I had the rallies.

Now, when I talked about the fairness issue, to me if you're just going to be fair for your friends, you're not really believing in the idea of fairness. I always felt that if you really believe in fairness it's got to be fair not just to your friends but fair to people who may

not be your friends. After the first state election, the Republicans controlled—the only time during the legislature was controlled—only one house, senate, was during that 1959 first state election. The Republicans had fourteen Republicans. Eleven Democrats. Bill Quinn was the governor. He sent down the name of the judicial appointments. Until then, all the judges were appointed out of Washington. For the first time, we were going to have judges appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate. He sent down the name of Sam [P.] King. Sam King had been a candidate. Ran against Dan Inouye in the fourth district and was chairman of the Republican party. So there was some very strong feelings amongst Democrats against Sam King. When his name came down, he didn't have the votes of two Republicans. Bernard Kinney and Julian Yates were there. They couldn't buy Sam King. So Sam King only had twelve Republican votes. Twelve out of twenty-five now. So he needed one more vote. We had our own caucus, and at our caucus people talked about, "We have eleven votes. If we stick together with the two dissenting Republicans we can dump Sam King."

I listened to all of that and then I said, "I have a question. I want to know what kind of person, what kind of judge Sam King would be if he got confirmed."

They told me, "He's very bright. They think he'll be a good judge. But that's not the issue. It's not relevant."

So I told them, "But, we're talking about a good judge that we want to confirm."

So they told me, "But this is politics now. We have a chance to really embarrass the administration."

So I told them, "Oh, embarrass the administration. But what about the person?"

They told me, "Well, he happens to be a . . . cannot help."

I told them, "You know, but, he's a parent. He's a husband. He's in the community now. To me we really strike a blow against him if we were not to confirm him."

They told me that they feel that this is politics and this is an opportunity. A very unique opportunity that we had to really embarrass the administration. After I listened to all that, I told them that I wanted them to understand why I am there, why I ran for office in the first place. To me I ran for office because I wanted fairness in the community. Ability rather than who you know [should matter]. Now we're saying that he is a good person and will be a good judge, but because we feel that he is not part of our group we have the right to dump him. I told them, "I have a hard time with that idea."

They told me, "Well, this is politics."

Finally, I told them, "I can't go along with it."

So when I left they told me, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "I'm going to go ahead and indicate that I'm going to support Sam King." And I called him.

Sam King told me, “Wow. I couldn’t sleep because I was very concerned, but now you give me the vote that I needed to get confirmed. The thirteenth vote.”

We could really go out and speak in terms of the principles we believe in, fairness. We can say we believe in the principle of fairness so much that even though this person is not our friend, we are willing to judge him fairly and apply this principle of fairness in this instance. To me a beautiful testimony to our beliefs about the need for people to be fair in our community. But I couldn’t sell the idea and it was very political.

Steere came up to me—Steere Noda—and he told me, “George, I’m going to be with you.”

Then Vince Esposito came out and he said, “I’m thinking about it. I haven’t decided yet, but I’m thinking about it and I’ll let you know what I’m going to do.” So I thought at that time I was not satisfied with the response I got from Vince. I thought he was going to be with me and going to tell me right away—I think it detracted from what he was saying to me because he said he would think about it. I expected him to be with me right there—tell me then that he believed very strongly in what I was saying, the principles I was trying to talk about.

MK: When you go back in time and you think about these old-time politicians—so far you’ve shared a little bit about Steere Noda—when you go back to that fifth district, what do you remember most about Charley Kauhane? You grew up in the district and he was a long-time politician, got elected and elected over again. What are your thoughts especially back in the 1954 election and the session that followed? Charley Kauhane.

GA: Charley was a very strong politician. He felt he had good control over the people who can help him get elected. He listened to them and he wanted us to all fall in line also. But, for us—the younger group—our feeling was that’s not the base on which we’re going to operate. We’re going to operate on the base of what we feel to be right and what’s wrong. What’s right, that’s going to be our criteria for taking positions. But Charley was very political. The ILWU were very powerful. If you don’t step in line they’re going to be there to let us know that we need to toe the line.

MK: So during the session how were relations between you and Charley Kauhane?

GA: I think there were times on the floor when I stood up and I opposed [some things]. I heard Charley later on talk about what hurt him the most was to think about this young kid in his own district speaking up on the floor opposing some things he wanted to push through. They told me that he felt that I really hurt him.

MK: Did he personally take you to task for that?

GA: Yeah. He felt very strongly about me not going along with everything that he wanted.

MK: I know later on in history you have someone like Elmer Cravalho who kind of kept a real close watch on things and had real tight control over fellow legislators. What was Charley Kauhane like in the ’55 session?

GA: We had an old notion back in those days about stopping the clock. We didn't extend the session but we took the last day of that session—we stopped the clock. No matter what day it was, it was still the same day—the last day. So that's what we practiced back in those days. Charley took the clock off the wall and put it in his trunk so nobody could start that clock when they came in the morning, he put it back up. He had security watching so that nobody tampered with that clock. So that's an example of the kind of control that he exerted and what he felt had to be done. In fact at one time, our group had heard that he had his goons looking out for us. I remember conversations with Dan Inouye at that time. Dan saying, "Hell, I went to war. I was not afraid of being shot at. So what, we're going to be afraid of goons that come around here?" By goons, it was some boys that hung around with Charley.

MK: How did you feel about that kind of. . . .

GA: I just felt that for me I wasn't afraid. I wasn't afraid of that kind of activity. But I also know Larry Mehau very well. Larry was my friend and he became my friend because I respected him for being a very honest person. When I talked to Fred Patterson, Patterson sent me out right away in order to give me experience with trial experience. So I was in court all the time.

One of the things that happened was Fred Patterson used to be a great criminal lawyer at one time and he was very close to Henry Awa Wong who was unofficial mayor of Chinatown. He had a liquor shop on Hotel and Maunakea [Streets]. Because he was kind of unofficial mayor of Chinatown, he had lots of gambling games going on [in] the Chinese houses there. Every time they had a raid about every two weeks they would come to him and he would bring all the bail receipts up to Patterson's office and turn it over to me. All endorsed already, ready to cash in. For two years I represented all the professional gamblers in Chinatown. Larry Mehau was on the vice court at that time. All the vice people who I represented always told me that man, Larry Mehau, was a very tough cop, very honest—afraid of him. But he's very honest and he would not lie and never have lied, even in court. Even if it meant the case would be dismissed, Larry never lied. So Larry had the respect of the gamblers; he had the respect of Judge [Harry] Steiner who handled a lot of the trials. I highly respected—I became very close to Larry. That's why later on when they talk about Larry being like the godfather [of organized crime], I knew that was not the situation. People respected him because he was honest and straight cop.

MK: So your association and knowledge of him went way back to the [19]50s?

GA: The gamblers used to talk about, "Larry came up the other day and he busted the door on the ground level, came up and busted that door down too. On the top level there's another door, he busted the door down and he came in. He wanted to know somebody was looking for him. He [said], 'Where is the guy? I'm looking for him now. I want to find out if he's man enough to come and tell me why he's looking for me.'" The gamblers used to tell me that.

I remember too they had a big snake and a little snake. Two gambling heads of the gambling groups. Men Tin Lee, I still remember the name. Men Tin Lee was big snake. He knew a guy who used to tell me about Larry, how he respects Larry because he's a

very honest cop. Later on when Larry needed information, Lee's people were willing to provide information to him.

When [state senator] Larry Kuriyama was shot [in 1970], I was at Governor Burns's at night, I went back to Washington Place. Security handed him a note, he opened a door and went into the kitchen. As soon as he stepped in he looked at it, and without turning around he just told me, "Larry Kuriyama got killed." Then, in the same breath he told me, "Find Larry Mehau." He was down at Don Ho's place. I tracked Larry down and told him to come down. He came and Governor Burns told him, "Make some inquiries. Go out there and find out what you can about what you think happened." That's the kind of contact that Larry had and he could go out and he could ask and I know that Men Tin Lee always—he was not controlled by Larry. He didn't ask anything for Larry, but when Larry wanted information, guys like Men Tin Lee was willing to tell him what he knew about what was happening in the community.

Because of that, they feel that Larry was head of the underworld. Which is to me, far, far from the truth. I knew where he was. You know the kind of person Larry was in my 1970 campaign? He told me he was going to help me coordinate neighbor islands, but he told me, "I'll help you do that, but keep my name out of the campaign."

I told him, "Why, Larry?"

He said, "Because, I carry some baggage."

I told him, "Larry," I said, "I don't feel that way about you and I would not be asking you for help if I felt you were a dishonest person. All the information I have—not from you but from other people—everybody painted you as a very honest person. In court you were very honest. The judges felt that they could believe you." I told Larry, "You're my friend, that's why you're going to help me. I cannot tell you to help me and tell you that you stay in the background because I'm ashamed that people might find out that you're my friend. You're my friend, you're going to help me, you're going to be named my neighbor island [gubernatorial campaign] coordinator." And that's what I did.

At that point Larry told me, "You know, you found out things about me, but now I'm finding out things about you." He said, "I really respect—you're my friend. If you're willing to take my name like that, and not just take my help, but willing to put my luggage along with that—my baggage around." So Larry and I got very close. To this date we remain very close.

MK: And you've been public about your friendship with Larry Mehau. How did your advisors take to this kind of openness?

GA: Nobody felt bad about what I did. The people who helped me, I'm really very grateful. They never came to me and told me that I owed them anything and I had to go along and I had to please. All told me, "We put you in there because we believe in you. You use the best judgment."

MK: Going back to the 1950s, we've talked about Kauhane and he exerted a lot of control. You talked about Vince Esposito. What are your recollections of the other people in office, say like Sakae Takahashi way back when?

GA: He didn't get along with us.

TC: How about Spark? Spark Matsunaga.

GA: I think the representatives all got together and there were fifteen of us who stuck together. (Pause) Oh, fifteen Democrats yeah? But out of the fifteen we were split seven and eight—Elmer Cravalho and the Maui group and some of the Big Island people. But our four here. . . . The fourth district—the four of us. And the five in the fifth dist—fourth district, we were very close together.

MK: So that would be you . . .

GA: Steere Noda.

MK: . . . Steere Noda . . .

WN: Esposito.

MK: . . . Esposito . . .

GA: Well, Espo was with us but we didn't feel that he was completely with us. Actually it's the two of us then the five on the other side. There were seven. I think Espo was counted as part of our group too—eight of us. We even had to go sleep downstairs in the finance committee room because we were afraid that the seven may come together with the others and do some things that we didn't want to do. We were afraid to even go out for lunch until we saw them going for lunch and then we went out also.

TC: Basically you're describing the O'ahu Democrats from the fourth and fifth districts. In that more immediate group, who would you say that you felt closest to? That you were most comfortable with, most trusting, maybe had enjoyed their company?

GA: In that group?

TC: Yeah.

GA: I think I was closest to Stanley Hara, who was not in the group—who is from Hawai'i. Stanley got very, very close because of the problem with the ILWU. But I was very close to Dan [Inouye], I supported him for him to become majority leader. I was close with Sparky too, but not as close because Sparky was kind of—he was with us and yet he was not. Kind of aloof. He felt he was in a different plane from us young kids.

MK: He was a little bit older too, yeah?

GA: Yes, yes. But he and Masato Doi . . .

MK: Masato Doi.

GA: . . . and Anna Kahanamoku.

MK: Anna Kahanamoku.

GA: Yeah, Anna Kahanamoku. I had great regard for Anna Kahanamoku because in so many ways—not that session but later on—when Patsy [Mink] got elected in the following election and we had Anna Kahanamoku on one side, Patsy—two women on O‘ahu. Anna always told us, “We do things together but sometimes if it meant got to go by yourself, and don’t worry about us coming along.” Patsy always felt she had to come along with us. So when we went to dinner, teahouse party or whatever, Patsy was always there, Anna was not.

TC: That’s a funny story. (WN and MK chuckle.)

GA: Anna was a real lady. I really respected her as a lady, yet was tough and who knew what she wanted to do, what position she wanted to take. We knew that when she said she was going to do something, we knew she was going to be there all around. That’s a very important part about politics. Once you say something to somebody about what you’re going to do, you cannot break that. The greatest sin that the politician can create is to break that commitment. Based upon what you tell them, somebody else may decide they want to do something. So, you kind of set up a chain reaction if you say something and you break that. That does not mean that you cannot change your mind, but you got to go back and you go to tell people. I was there but I changed my mind—I got some new ideas, new information. It’s not a commitment that you make forever, but it’s a commitment you make up until you decide that’s not who you are and you got to go back and you got to tell the people that. I think our people—the fourth and fifth district people, Steere—that’s how we operated. Our word was our bond.

TC: The group of neighbor island Democrats who were aligned with the ILWU and with Charley. You were jittery to the point where you would look around to see who was there for lunch. How can you explain that to people? Why was there such a schism between O‘ahu and the neighbor islands? What extent was ILWU behind this? What did you think was going on?

GA: You got to understand that we, in the ‘55 session, were there for the first time. We didn’t know very much about politics at that point. I think those who got elected from the neighbor islands, the ILWU played a very, very strong, dominant role in their campaign. So we never really felt angry or disappointed with them. We knew that sometimes. . . .

Stanley Hara was one of these outside island people. Stanley Hara was with us. Stanley was with us because of some of the workman’s compensation issues. We were being told, everything was on workman’s compensation—what the ILWU wanted was going to be steamrolled. Some of us felt that, hey look, we want to examine this. What they wanted was, they felt something, they want us to—they told us to jump. They don’t want us to talk about whether we ought to jump. They wanted us to [say], “Oh, how high?” That kind of control they wanted to exert back in those days.

I remember talking to Stanley about unemployment coverage for fieldworkers, and at that time they were not covered. I campaigned hard on this and I said, “How come you work

in the field for the same company—you work in the shop you're covered—and you work field, you're not covered? To me it's very wrong. That's not fair." I campaigned hard on this issue for fairness and coverage for people, similarly located for the same company. During the the legislature, all of a sudden—we used to go up about eleven o'clock start looking at the bills that were coming for third reading. I go up there and I find this bill up for third reading and it's unemployment compensation for ag workers. I asked them questions. Dan was the majority leader and "Najo" [Nadao Yoshinaga] was the labor leader. So I went to Dan and I told him, "Dan, this bill coming up, can't you think we can have it deferred?"

He told me, "Najo is spearheading this on the floor today. So you got to go talk to Najo [Nadao Yoshinaga]."

I went and talked to Najo. Najo told me, "No, the thing has been cleared already and ready to be voted on third reading." So he told me I had go talk to [Robert] McElrath.

So I went to McElrath, and McElrath told me, "Nope, the thing's come for third reading today. We've had a chance to look at it."

I said, "I haven't had a chance to look at it. I got to vote on it."

He said, "Well, I'm telling you it's okay for you to vote on it."

I told, "That's not good enough for me." I tell him, "You know Mac, you got to understand how hard I campaigned for coverage of ag workers. I want to be sure that's the way things going to be handled and happens correctly."

So he told me, "Well, there's some changes, some flaws, we can take care of it in senate."

I told him, "I'm not a senator. I want to be sure. I'm voting now. I want to be sure that I'm voting for the right kind of thing."

He told me, "You know, we voted on it this morning."

So I got up—when the session started I got up on the floor and I told them, "You know, I've tried to get this thing deferred and I am for the bill, for the measure. I want to be sure that's the kind of measure. I just want to check that out. I'm seeing it on third reading for the first time."

So Dan called a caucus. We went to caucus and I told him, "You folks, I'll be satisfied if all of you can tell me that you have had a chance to read this and you understand it completely and that it will be the kind of bill that there are no mistakes on it, because it refers to sections so-and-so and amended to read so it keeps going back to different sections. That's what I want to be sure we check out."

So nobody could tell me that they would be, so they decided, "Let's call Toshimi Sodehani," the labor lawyer. Have him come and explain the bill and ask any questions. We had an afternoon session and we had the session. We asked all the questions. I was satisfied. So seven-thirty we're going to vote on the measure. I stood up on the floor at that time and I thanked everybody for the opportunity to reexamine the measure more

thoroughly. I told them that the only purpose of my doing that—I'm in favor of this measure—but the only purpose of doing this was because I wanted to be sure that we voted for a measure that I wanted and not find out later on that we might have voted for a—I used the word—"monster." Though I regret using that word at that time later on. My next campaign, ILWU—my '56 campaign—took an ad out and they said that I referred to this bill as a monster. That's what the campaign was all about. They campaigned hard against me because of that. Stanley Hara and I were very close on this issue and he felt for me very strongly. In that way, in that sense, sometimes back in those days, they did things that were very unfair.

TC: Could I ask. . .?

GA: I got to follow through. [In the 1954 campaign,] Patterson and Jack Hall got involved. Jack Hall later on became a very strong supporter of mine. He was the one who told Patterson, "How come that kid is being so hard-headed?" Patterson explained to him what was happening about how they want to campaign. Jack Hall's comment was, "I don't blame him for taking that kind of position." I think that had something to do with them finally coming back to me saying, "One week you go ahead and pass your cards but the last week don't do anything."

TC: How about Najo in that setting with this bill? What were your impressions of how he functioned and where he was coming from?

GA: I had personal respect for Najo. Tom Ebesu also knew Najo very well too. I had that personal regard for him, but I knew also that Najo was very labor-oriented and was going to go along with what he thought had to be done for the ILWU.

TC: He had gone back to Maui and got elected from Maui, and David K. Trask was from Maui at that point.

GA: Right.

TC: Who were some of these other . . .

GA: Kimura. There was a Kimura. And Elmer. Four. Elmer, David Trask, Kimura. Not Bob Kimura. Anyway, his last name was Kimura. And Najo [Nadao Yoshinaga].

TC: Najo, yeah. Strong figures. In this neighbor island group, other than Stanley—who was basically a Hilo product—how would you characterize if you imagined who you thought was the most capable or trusted, or somebody that you could turn to and have a conversation with, straight conversation?

GA: Stanley and I did that often.

TC: Beyond Stanley, though.

GA: Oh. I talked to all the O'ahu legislators. I felt Steere and I were very close. I felt that Dan ought to know the feelings we were having because he was majority leader. Masato Doi understood what we were doing.

TC: How about from the neighbor islands? Other than Stanley.

GA: I think from neighbor islands, David Trask was very good. Elmer got very close to me also. I had great regard for Najo. In the 1969 legislative session, we had fifteen senate Democrats, we were trying to organize. They were split seven-seven. Nelson Doi group, and Yoshinaga group. I was the person right in the middle. I was trying to keep everybody together. So they made me caucus chair and I was the one who called the caucus together to try to see whether or not we could move ahead. The feelings were very, very strong. Nelson Doi's group came to me and told me—they offered me the presidency on the condition that I would ice out Najo. Not Najo's group, but ice out Najo. My response was, Najo is very strong on the labor side. But he's a very competent, very able person. He's very creative and far-sighted in many other ways. I told him that I cannot see doing that to a person like Najo. He represents a group of people in Maui, his constituents. So I told them I couldn't buy that.

So they told me, "Then you're not president."

I told them, "Oh, that's okay."

They decided later on that not only did they not give me the presidency, but they were going to punish me. Najo came back to me, and Najo told me, "Hey, they're really angry at you because you didn't accept the presidency."

I told Najo, "It doesn't matter. For me I just have my own vote; I have my own feelings about the issues that come out. I'm going to be able to exercise my own freedom in that way." But they decided to punish me by offering me the committee on utilities. But during that session I didn't get angry or anything like that. I tried to participate the best that I can and be as helpful as possible. (This was the 1967 session.)

In the '69 organization, David McClung came to me and told me he was very concerned about what I was going to do during that '67 session on the floor. How I was going to take it out on them. But he told me he really appreciated my conduct and how I tried to be very helpful. David told me at that point, "I'll give you first crack at any position you want. You want to be ways and means chairman? You want to be majority leader? You want to be majority floor leader? Three positions. It's yours for the asking."

My response was, "I'm not asking for anything. I'm serving. I'm going to serve wherever I can serve."

Then he told me, "Okay." He appreciates that feeling. He said he wants me to be majority floor leader because he feels that things will be very contentious on the floor and he wants me there to be kind of—make things happen on the floor. That's how I became majority floor leader during the 1969 session of the legislature.

WN: I was wondering, when you talk about neighbor islanders versus the O'ahu legislators—you know, this pre-sunshine law days. Neighbor islanders would stay in a hotel and I've heard stories where they commiserate and caucus together. You folks actually . . .

GA: . . . were split.

WN: And then you guys went home.

GA: That's right.

WN: Did you see it? Was that a big difference in terms of . . .

GA: Yes it was. I think that's one of the reasons why neighbor island people could stick together so much.

WN: Was there any element of distrust? "Oh man, they're probably talking right now. They're having dinner together and talking. Whereas we're at home by ourselves with our families." Anything like that?

GA: No, no. I think we understood. We understood circumstances. I know what other people felt. I never felt that I had to be careful about them scheming and doing some things—talking together.

TC: I want to ask a couple of questions in here. The ILWU keeps coming up over and over the way it has in written literature, et cetera. You had this messages of sort of reasonableness from Jack Hall. More farsighted point of view, but in the day-in and day-out functioning of campaigns and legislative sessions and so on, did you have this sense of them on an emotional level being angry? There's a certain level of anger at work and also contempt for politicians. Maybe a contempt for the political process.

GA: I think things changed a lot from the time I first ran for office until the time when I was still in the senate.

TC: I'm talking about the like '54 let's say.

GA: Oh yeah. There was some very strong feelings. I think that the '56 election the ILWU came out—they didn't endorse me. In fact, they were very strongly opposed to me. They put out ads in the newspaper—paid ads—attacking me as a person who labeled a very important bill as a monster. I used the word "monster" but in a very different kind of way. But they attacked me very strongly.

TC: What do you think laid behind this sort of contempt though? Do you think that's a right word? They felt a contempt for people who—like you wanted to hold the session up to examine this.

GA: I think the mind-set there was they wanted to control. The control meant not just controlling the votes on the measures, but how that happened. When I mentioned they tell us to jump, they want as a response not whether I should jump or not. They wanted a response, "How high?" That's what they wanted. They wanted that kind of control. But I saw that change also. I saw people like Ed DeMello [ILWU legislative lobbyist] become very, very highly regarded amongst the legislators. He became my friend. When I became governor, there were times when I called on ILWU people to get some feelings for what was happening in the labor movement so I can become more knowledgeable and more informed about what I had to do in order to make improvements. So all the people who were—and Eddie DeMello was not part of that group in '54 anyway.

TC: He wasn't there.

GA: Yeah, but Eddie became very . . .

TC: It was more [Robert] McElrath right?

GA: McElrath was there. But even McElrath [ILWU president], by the time I became governor, I could call McElrath and I could ask his opinion about things that were happening. He was very candid. He became my friend also.

TC: How about Ed Nakamura? He didn't appear until about '59 but how do you think he functioned in that combination of people?

GA: I think a person, maybe a person like Ed, helped bring about some of the changes we began to see in the ILWU, because Ed was a very different kind of person. He lived up Nu'uano but he rode the bus. He took the bus every day. I think that says something about the kind of person that he was also. Even when it came to supreme court justice, he was taking the bus. He never changed and always had very strong feelings about—he was pro-labor—about labor being protected and taken care of. But he had strong feelings about fairness in the community, too.

TC: Let me back up to just one kind of very general question and I'll back away. Today we look back on people in the Democratic party. They talk about the 1954—a revolution sometimes people call that, but certainly a redirecting of history. When you look back, if you can look back on like the youngest member of this legislature, and your political experience was very limited to the campaign in terms of active experience, and you looked around, what was your meeting room at the palace? Did you have sense that this was a historic or simply that it was another session and the Democrats happened to come out ahead?

GA: Are you referring to the '54-'55 session?

TC: Fifty-four. Fifty-five session. You looked around the '55 session. First time—there's your desk. What did you think?

GA: I wondered what I was going to do with the power, how I was going to make it work. The things that I wanted to have happen. But I also felt very strongly—I think we all at that time, the '55 session group, all felt that there was a sense of destiny. Some things that we had to do in order to bring about the changes. We felt also that I think during that session they were there, and us we were here. But, I think that started to come together and come together because there were some people on the other side in the Big Five group who began to feel that changes ought to take place and they can't operate. That guy bald. . . .

TC: [Harold] Eichelberger?

GA: Eichelberger. Yeah. Eichelberger was one of those. Boyd MacNaughton also began to feel very different.

TC: Henry Walker?

GA: Henry Walker, yeah, also started to feel very differently and started to feel we've got to work together, at some point we have, they got to understand, they got to change. Boyd MacNaughton came around—I never felt comfortable with Malcolm [MacNaughton]. But I felt very comfortable with Eichelberger, with Henry Walker, Boyd MacNaughton.

In fact, Boyd MacNaughton called me one day, and this was in the [19]60s. He heard that I was being appointed—approached by an insurance company to be on the board of that insurance company. He contacted me and he told me, "Please don't accept, because I want you to serve on our Hawaiian Insurance Guaranty board." And he told me, "You will be the first person—outsider—serving on one of our boards. I want you to be our board member." So he told me, "Please don't accept that." He carried through, put me on the board, and then he told me, "I want you to be Hawaiian Insurance Guaranty's legal counsel."

So, Boyd, I saw a person who was part of the Big Five really changing. Eichelberger used to come to the legislature and we could always ask him about measures that were before the legislature. What impact it will have on the Big Five.

TC: How about certain plantation managers? Did you have a sense of plantation managers, certain ones coming around and being more collaborative?

GA: Who's the guy who became land director under [Governor John D.] Waihee? He was Waialua Plantation . . .

WN: Oh, Paty.

MK: Paty, Paty.

WN: Bill Paty.

GA: Bill Paty, yeah. [Years later,] in fact, Bill Paty's wife [Marguerite "Peggy" Paty] came to see me one day. She told me that Kaiaka Point—that was the point, the whole area is going to be subdivided. Subdivision approval has been sought now before the city. She told me it would be a shame if we lost that as a park. Because she talked to me, I went ahead and [state of Hawai'i] purchased all the old Kaiaka Point. She was the one who told me about it.

TC: Your description of looking around in the 1955 session and having some sense of destiny I think is very interesting because people don't actually know too much about how people really felt. Was there a sense of John A. Burns's presence at work from a party point of view or was he not in the legislative session?

GA: He was not too evident in the session itself. But it was after that, that I began to learn about Jack Burns as a person and what he tried to do and how he was distrusted by some people as being just like a spy. You know? He went and he spied amongst the Japanese [in Hawai'i] and he did a lot of things, but I came to the conclusion that he was really there to help the Japanese. Had it not been for his effort, maybe some Japanese might have been treated very differently, maybe incarcerated—taken away. I developed a sense

of regard for Jack Burns and a sense of gratitude for the things that he did to help the Japanese Americans in Hawai'i. In his 1956 campaign, I got involved in his . . .

WN: This was for delegate.

GA: Delegate campaign. We tried to get Tom Gill's group to understand how we got to come together. But we could never get Tom Gill's group to support and understand Jack Burns's. . . .

TC: How do you think the story of Burns's wartime experience percolated up? Do you remember anybody telling you this? How do you think that went around? Because you didn't even know about it until '55-'56 it sounds like.

GA: I think it was talking amongst ourselves, and people like Dan Inouye—I think Dan was a person who knew most about Jack Burns—who talked to us about what Jack Burns had done in the community, and what he was doing at the university trying to get young people involved.

TC: Did you make that connection between ESC and Shigeo Yoshida and when you heard the Burns story did you realize Burns was kind of like working in parallel with him?

GA: No.

TC: You didn't connect those dots at that point.

How about Dan Inouye? Your 1955 relationship with him was quite good it sounds like. What was going on?

GA: I think we believed in the same kind of things. I felt strongly about the fairness—everybody being treated equal and fairly and about the Big Five should not have that kind of influence over the economy in our state. I think we all agreed and I think Dan Inouye was one of the leaders who helped move us in that direction too.

I think Russell Kono and I became very close also during the session and after the session. In fact, Russell asked me to join his group law practice—Bert Kobayashi, Russell Kono, Alfred Laureta—and I joined them. The four of us became partners. The reason why he approached me was because Fred Patterson passed away and they felt that I was all alone now and they wanted me to have some comfort in my law practice. So I joined together. All of us were not part of Jack Burns's group. We were not in Tom Gill's either. So we got together. We talked about us being more independent and how maybe we can bring a voice to Jack Burns and helping—supporting—him. That was what we tried to do. Bert Kobayashi Sr. tried to talk to. . . . Not Bert Kobayashi. (Pause) Yeah, it was Bert. We tried to talk to Tom Gill's group but we just couldn't get anywhere and at that point the four of us got together and we said, "Okay, we tried to keep everybody together, but time for us to join that group and try to help support Jack Burns."

TC: You were in a way kind of like this third force of free-floating and so when I first started covering politics . . .

WN: We've got one minute.

TC: Okay, one minute.

People would say things like, “Ariyoshi’s not really a politician. Ariyoshi is—he’s not in the trenches.” I think there were a few people who thought you were above it all, so they resented you because you wouldn’t. . . . Inside those sort of vague feelings that surrounded you and your image were these instances where you had really taken positions—where you were alone. I wonder if you could just talk about that and explain that to me.

WN: We have to change tapes.

TC: That’s my question. I’ll leave Michi and Warren with that.

WN: We’re going to change tapes or we’re going to . . .

TC: Yeah, we’ll change tapes. Let’s change . . .

MK: It’s almost twelve you know?

TC: You want to keep going, Governor? Maybe at least for that question. Jeff’s going to be here at one.

GA: Unless Kay comes to me.

TC: No, you know I talked to Kay and she said your schedule is okay.

Yeah, my question, Michi you go ahead.

MK: I guess what we’ve discovered is that here we are talking to probably the most successful officeholder in Hawai‘i. You’ve never lost an election. And yet, when we look at your history of service, you don’t seem to be like a politician. Talk to us about that. You’re just saying that when you were first asked you. . . .

GA: I think several factors are very important in my life as a politician. Number one, my father. The lesson that I learned from him time after time about hanging in, *ganbatte*, do what you have to do. Be honorable. Don’t bring shame. Those kind of things really—the part of my life I wanted to do the right things, I wanted to be honorable.

Also, I never wanted to be a politician. I didn’t want to run for office in 1954. In 1969 when I was being asked by Jack Burns between Christmas and New Year’s to get ready for the 1970 election—become a part of it—it was not something that I wanted to do. For me, my law practice was my first love so I always felt that I was giving up something. But I was going to give it up because I felt it was important and I listened to Jack Burns and what it might be. I always felt that I didn’t have to be there. If people didn’t feel that I was the right person, I could accept not being in office any longer. So for me, I think I was more free to try to do what I wanted to do, not be forced to do things I didn’t want to do, or lean, or say things I didn’t feel very strongly about.

I go out and give many speeches today. I don’t have any notes prepared—anything before me. But I speak without any notes because whatever I say, I believe in. I feel very

strongly about. I think that's what it was my whole political life. It's what I believed in, what I felt very strongly about, and my speaking about them was an extension of my feelings and thoughts. Understanding that that alone did not make for success. I needed to get people to come and join me and work together and making things happen. I think it was me, my feelings, my thoughts, what I wanted, feeling very strongly about them. But also, having many people join me in that effort to understand. . . . I never went out on campaign and talked about, "Oh, I built certain things. I did capital improvements." My campaign was always that we have a community where we got to have a lot of people working together (for the future). There's a light at the end of the tunnel, that's what we got to look at. We've got to work together to get there so we can get that light shining through.

MK: When you spoke earlier about the 1950s campaigning, you said your overarching theme was fairness, fairness in different aspects of life that government was involved in. You spoke about your efforts for change in unemployment compensation. But what other things did you campaign for—on the basis of?

GA: I think we had a wholesale revision of our tax laws in the mid-sixties, and we looked at our tax burdens and what our taxes did. We had before then a 2 percent tax on everything that took place. We felt that was not a very fair tax, so we changed that. So I think that a revision of our tax laws was very, very important. Especially important because Hawai'i is the only jurisdiction that does not have many different groups taxing the same. . . . So we were able to look at tax burdens and we would look at fairness of our tax burdens and how we needed to take care of our people on a very fair basis.

The fairness issue was very important and I think one of the things that came up, for example, was in 1980–81. Impact aid to education from the federal government to the state was very important. There was talk about that being taken away—done away with. [Ronald] Reagan became our president. The legislature passed a bill—I thought they were kidding, I didn't realize they were coming through, but it passed very rapidly—passed a bill saying that if impact aid to education did not come from federal government, that the federal families—military and federal employees their families—would have to pay tuition in order to attend our public schools. I thought to myself what an unfair law this was. Because the people who were going to be affected were not the parents, the people who were going to be affected was children. We were going to say that because the federal government was not going to give us monies, we were going to take it out on the parents and on them—to say they had to pay tuition in order to attend our public schools. I felt that was very, very unfair. Not only unfair there, but we're talking about not hurting or not doing anything to beat up or treat unfairly the military—the white, Caucasian families. We were making the distinction between us and them. It would just open up the hatred against the military groups, the federal group if we passed such a legislation. It really comes down to fairness. I don't want to tell you who was in favor—who come to see me. But I had people approach me to tell me that I had to approve this legislation. When they found out that I was in the process of thinking about a veto, they came to see me and told me, "You can't do this. We don't really mean this."

I said, "What do you mean, you don't mean this? You're making this a law saying that we are making the distinction between the federal family and the local family. That's what we cannot have. We got to be together." They argued hard. But I told them, "You

had your chance to convince me. I'm not convinced. I have reasons why I have to veto this legislation. That's what I'm going to do." And I vetoed it.

MK: So over all the long decades that you're in office, this emphasis on fairness was the overriding theme.

GA: Yes. Yes.

MK: When we read the history books, about the 1954 election, the term "Democratic Revolution" is applied to it. Having been a part of that group, how do you assess that 1954 experience? What meaning does it have?

GA: I think looking at two things generally. The desire to have fairness in this community and the desire to not have the Big Five control the economy in the way that they controlled it, and the Big Five coming along to change from what they were doing. I think those things are very, very important, had great impact on our community. I think that not only was it historic, but I think they formed a foundation for the expansion and growth of our state government into becoming a more—acknowledging the diversity, acknowledging the differences in our community, acknowledging however different we may be, we've got to come together and work together and be fair to each other. The fairness issue, frankly was also telling people they don't have to change to become part of a diverse group. They retain whatever their feelings may be, whatever their background may be—keep all of that, the language, the culture, the music, and everything else. Retaining all of that and they can become part of everybody else in the community. So, I think that '54 session led to all of that and made it possible for us to look at people and say that we want fairness, we want diversity. In order to be fair we got to tell people they don't have to become like somebody else, they remained exactly the person that they are and they participate in that same fashion. It meant also in the fairness issue, that the Big Five had to really change also in order to have a more just and fair community. To me, that's what the 1954 election—'55 session—represented.

TC: Is that a good place to stop?

WN: I just wanted to ask one. I know next time we can get more in detail with the 1955 session as well as the '56 election. But I wanted to ask you, most young people today know only single-member districts. You were part of this multi-member district. So you had people like Steere Noda representing the same area. I'm sure you had to work with people like Yasutaka Fukushima who was a Republican, but yet representing the same district with the same constituents. What was that like?

GA: I am very much for going back to the multi-member district. Because, I think it makes it possible for a legislator to take a bigger point of view, rather than just a narrow "what's good for my constituents." I think what has happened also, once they stopped doing that, it affects the campaign spending also. Today I get letters from people who represent me and they talk about what they've done, and basically it comes down to all the appropriation legislative pork-barrel things—the schools, the things that they got. . . . It no longer is a statement of the big policies that they believe important for Hawai'i. I think the multi-member district, I think that's what it comes back to. You're not talking about just improvements within the district. You're talking about the big issues, the big

questions, that need to be addressed in order for us to have a more progressive community.

WN: And yet at the same time, you still had to work with people like Fukushima on an issue relating to Waialua or Wahiawā and so forth.

GA: That's right. That's right. We were able to work on that kind of basis but we never forgot that there was more than just those pork-barrel items.

WN: Okay.

MK: We should end here.

WN: Thank you.

TC: Thanks Governor.

MK: That was very good.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-13-8-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

June 20, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

WN: Session number eight with Governor Ariyoshi on June 20, 2012, and the interviewers are Warren Nishimoto, Michi Kodama-Nishimoto, and Tom Coffman.

MK: Okay. Well, as I said earlier, sometimes we go a little bit backwards and then we go forward. It’s because we kind of want to follow up on something that maybe we didn’t get to talk about. You know, in the early 1950s you helped your father obtain his citizenship with the McCarran-Walter Act coming through.

GA: Yes.

MK: So, your father’s becoming more American?

GA: Yes.

MK: But then on the flip side, at that same time, your father and yourself become involved in building a sumo *dohyō* in Nu‘uanu.

GA: Yeah. Yes.

MK: That’s very Japanese and I just wanted to have you talk about why you folks were doing that and how you were doing that up in Nu‘uanu.

GA: See my father was very concerned that old *sumō-toris* [sumo wrestlers] were getting old and before they went he wanted to use them to help train young *sumō-toris*. He felt it was important to have a *dohyō*. A *dohyō* is a sumo [ring]—in order to make it possible for the training to take place. He didn’t want to have it only ground level, he wanted people to get the feeling of a sumo. A little bit elevated. If they fall, they’re going to fall down about a foot or so.

WN: So a sumo ring is elevated.

GA: Yes.

WN: Okay.

- GA: He did it exactly the way the sumo *dohyō* is in a traditional sumo match.
- MK: Where in Nu‘uanu did you build this *dohyō*?
- GA: There was a temple out on Judd Street. From Nu‘uanu Avenue on Judd Street as you turn into Judd on the left-hand side about a hundred yards or so, there was a Japanese temple there. We talked to them and they wanted to do this, so we had it set up over there—built over there.
- MK: What was the community’s reaction to this *dohyō* being built?
- GA: We had lots of young people coming and training. Particularly there was a—I’m thinking an ‘Aiea group—a very active sumo group, and they came and they used that *dohyō* quite often.
- MK: Then what was your involvement in this group and the building of the *dohyō*?
- GA: I helped my father. My father and I, we got some donations from people, too. I didn’t participate in the actual building myself, but my father did because he was very familiar with how he tried to do it. Mine was more helping, encouraging and assisting my father, because he felt very strongly he wanted to do it quickly.
- MK: You know, at about that time too the Japanese Chamber of Commerce had been operating from after the war. At first they changed their name to not—it didn’t say “Japanese.” Then later on, they did identify themselves as a Japanese Chamber of Commerce and their—like the Cherry Blossom Festival was coming up and things Japanese were coming up more and more.
- GA: Yes, yes.
- MK: What were your thoughts or your family’s thoughts on all this?
- GA: Well, when I came back from law school—1952—just about that time, I forgot the name of the chamber of commerce person here, but he was very much for eliminating all the chambers and everybody coming together and having one chamber. I heard about that and I talked to him about it. I told him I was very much opposed to it because I believe that it’s important for each group to retain whatever their cultural, their musical, art background maybe. You don’t have to change in this community in order to become part of a whole. I felt that elimination of the chamber would be a message that we didn’t want to have any ethnic groups of any kind. He and I had quite a bit of argument on this. We talked very strongly. He felt very strongly and I felt very strongly, but eventually he ended up not doing anything towards eliminating the chambers.
- I think my feelings about retention of people’s background—their culture, the arts, and music, the language that they speak—I think all of these things were very important to me and became even more important when I had to have this kind of conversation with him. I began to feel very strongly the thing that was very important to me was in Hawai‘i you didn’t have to become like somebody else. You can remain exactly the person you are—do everything the way you want to do them and still you can be part of the whole.

Then, if you do that, you provide better understanding. You provide exposure of culture that you have some part in, somebody else has the same kind of thing. And as a result we become more exposed, we understand each other better because of the culture. I think I began to feel even stronger after I had that kind of conversation about the elimination or non-elimination of the ethnic chambers.

MK: You know like nowadays or even the last few decades, when I would see posters or campaign material up on the streets, if there was someone running of Japanese ancestry you could tell by the last name and then sometimes you had people who were of mixed ancestry. But they would make it a point to put in their Japanese middle name, in a way communicating to the public “I am of Japanese ancestry.” When you first ran for office in ’54, how did the heritage thing—the ancestry issue—factor in?

GA: I think the number one strong political factor during that period was the unions. They were very strong in my district, the ILWU [International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union]. I felt very strongly that the ILWU was made up of people who weren’t necessarily very fluent in English, but they were really Japanese. They participated in that effort.

One of the things I felt running for office would make it possible was for me to be an encouragement to those who are maybe concerned about their being in a minority or in a different kind of setting. The fairness issue became very important for me. That’s what made me run for office in (1954). Because I was very concerned about the fact that we didn’t have that fairness. So that fairness issue—the basic economic fairness issue—became I think very much a part of the personal feelings about individuals having an opportunity. Individuals doing whatever they want to do, not having to change and do exactly what they wanted, be themselves and strive for improvement and opportunities in our community.

MK: In your case, you had fluency in Japanese . . .

GA: Not that fluent but I could speak it. (Chuckles)

MK: And you had fluency in Pidgin. You grew up Pālama side. When you were---and also fluency in standard English. You spent time in college and on the Mainland. So, when you went campaigning, how did you talk?

GA: I think I spoke the best English that I could, because back in those days we had a lot of rallies. But the coffee hour—the coffee hours and house-to-house canvassing, our group did a lot of because we had a lot of manpower. I think that I spoke in the same way that the person I was talking to spoke, so that the person would not feel that I’m somebody different. I am one of them.

I think my whole 1954 election—I think that was only me, but everybody else, I think we related to the people who we were going to represent. We could speak their language and talk to them about the issues that they were concerned about, about some of the cultural background that they had. Our effort was to make everybody comfortable and make everybody understand that this is what Hawai‘i is all about—every person being

comfortable in who you are. That does not prevent you from participating in the affairs—total affairs, of the community.

MK: In that '54 campaign, when you look back you think about the coffee hours, the rallies, what are some of the times that you really remember as being really—it went really well or it was really hard to do for you?

GA: Because I had such a short amount of time when I made a decision to run, the rallies were very important. Back in those days we had rallies—the parties scheduled all over the islands, and I ran through there. The thing that I came across in so many instances were people coming to me at the rally and telling me, “I need some help, I have children and can you spare some money to help my kids.” I thought about that the first time that came to me, I didn't have money. So, it was an economic thing. I didn't feel I could give anything to them, but I spent a lot of time thinking about it after the first person approached me.

The first person who approached me was in 'A'ala Park. I thought about, what if that person wanted money from me and did he really need it for his family? Was it kind of a standard the way he was approaching not only me but it seems that we were the targets and trying to go to every candidate, and I found out that was happening also. In fact, the other candidates began to tell me when they saw me at 'A'ala Park and this guy came up to me and kind of pulled me off on the side, they all told me—they stopped me—they told me come back. They didn't want to go and he wanted to take me off to the side, so he started talking directly about needing some money.

I thought about that, and I felt very strongly that it was not the right thing to do. To me it's not the right thing, no matter how much the needs were. That was not the right setting in which they should go panhandling and get some monies from people. They were taking advantage of the fact that we were seeking votes. I made up my mind at that time that I would not be victim to that kind of approach. Other ways that they wanted to approach me in a different kind of setting, it was okay. I would consider that, but at the rallies I decided I would not become a victim to people coming—coercing me to give money.

MK: Were there other requests made? Were there other requests made of you besides money? What else would they want from you?

GA: Not very much. I found that campaign—the '54 election—very gratifying. Easy to handle, because everybody that I had approached they were all very eager, willing to help and not wanting me to do without. So the image was very positive for me during that campaign.

MK: They were very receptive to you.

GA: Yes.

TC: Can I interject? Just hold that right there but let's go back to where you were.

You know when you talk about people handing out money, were there other candidates who did hand out money or you think that traditionally there had been political figures who handed out money?

GA: I know. I know that that's done at the rallies. That's why . . .

TC: And they'd walk around with like—how much would they hand out? Fifty cents? A quarter? Dollars, or what?

GA: Small amount. Yeah. Because you know, and fifty cents back in those days . . .

TC: Bought something.

GA: Yeah, lots of money. Because you could buy—you could have lunch for fifty cents.

TC: Are there any people you can say who was doing that because this has never come up in historical accounts to my knowledge. It's called "walking-around money" in third world countries, right?

GA: I know who did it, but I don't want to mention their names.

TC: Were there more than one? How isolated or how widespread was it?

GA: I know at least two who did.

TC: Okay, thanks. I was really curious about that.

MK: No, that's interesting, because I didn't think it was a practice. I don't know how common it was, but that's interesting.

TC: It's very interesting.

GA: Yeah.

MK: And so, others more experienced than yourself would tell you, "Okay, don't go with that guy," because they knew what was going to be asked of you.

GA: That's right.

MK: I guess the common image that we have of you, Governor, is that you're so reticent, you're so shy and quiet, that I've been wondering, what was it like for you in '54 to make that transition from a private person to a public person? You got to go out to rallies. You got to go to coffee hours. You got to shake hands.

GA: The rallies are not a problem for me. Speaking at the rallies is not. The problem for me was, shyness part came in, and I had a hard time going around shaking hands with people, circulating. I had to be encouraged to do that. You've got to move. You can't just stand and have everybody come to you. I think even when I became governor, when I used to go to functions, large functions, somebody had to go with me and take me around. Otherwise I just stood in one place and talked there with people.

WN: Did your campaign message change at all? Say at a rally in Kalihi as opposed to a rally in Kahuku?

GA: No, because I think that my real issue was fairness and I wanted the fairness extended. When I went to Waipahu, Kahuku, those areas, I talked about the unfair unemployment compensation laws that covered people in the shops, in the garage, but didn't cover out in the field. So that became a fairness issue with me when I went to plantation areas.

At that time, the city and county had a ceiling of eight million dollars property taxes they could raise. The whole city, Honolulu, they were limited to raising a total of eight million dollars. I felt that it was very wrong, improper, ceiling that was placed on them by another government—the state government. That was the other issue I campaigned hard on, that we ought to take that ceiling off. Not the state apply that ceiling, but the city, the county themselves decide how much they wanted to raise in property taxes.

MK: So for you, that was like a home rule issue.

GA: That's right.

MK: You wanted the city to have that right.

GA: But there were many other home rule issues, but one of the home rule issues was additional taxing powers of the city. I was very strong against that home rule issue, because I felt as Hawai'i was very lucky, we had one single taxing authority: the state. The county had the property taxes but nothing else. Because of that, we could look at our tax laws and we could look at burdens of taxation and how burdens of taxation apply to one person or business, and we could determine whether or not it was a fair burden. Whereas if we didn't have that you could have the City and County of Honolulu and state all taxing the same interest. And the same interest is the income tax would be very easy tax.

MK: In those days you were interested in labor issues, tax reform, home rule issues?

GA: Yes. But it all came down to the question of fairness. If I think back at all of the things I tried to do, everything came down to: is it fair?

MK: How about education?

GA: I was a very strong supporter of education from the very beginning, because again, the fairness issue comes in. You got to be fair to our people, and every person, no matter where they live, ought to have the best opportunity to succeed. Opportunity to succeed comes from how well you get trained, how well you get educated. To me, education was a great equalizer if you treated everybody fairly. I felt very strongly about the fairness issue again. About how important it was for people to get educated. If you don't provide that kind of education, the people who get educated in private schools or whatever are going to get ahead of the rest of the community. I felt that was not so good. Education is a very important part of our fairness issue.

MK: Back in those days, maybe one of the real concrete offerings politicians could push were like capital improvement projects. How about yourself, when it came to building or repairing?

GA: In the '54 session, the '55 session, we did some of that. CIP [Capital Improvement Projects], there wasn't that much monies, so the districts would get together and the allocations would be doled out. We're going to have so many million dollars to this district, so many to this district. So people got together. District representatives got together. The fifth district representatives got together, and the fourth district representatives got together to allocate the funds that were available. So it was kind of all set for us at that level. We knew what we were going to get. I felt strongly about us getting a fair share of those dollars.

I never really felt so strongly that I wanted to campaign. I never campaigned hard on CIP. Except, when I looked at CIP from what we wanted to achieve. For example, when I became governor I felt it was very important for education and educators in the community and in schools to come together as much as possible. I thought about how we could make that possible. I concluded that a good way to do that was to have a gym at every high school. A gym could bring adults to play. They don't have leagues and all kind of things there. Once they came they would take care of the school, they would take care of the gyms, they would see that you don't have vandalism and things like that. So, I became very interested and I built a gym in almost every high school. When I heard the people at this high school talk about how they want to keep it good and clean so it doesn't get beat up and have minimal use only for the students, I talked with them. You know, that's the reason why I personally supported it. I personally wanted more people to use it. Sure, you got to fix it up, but maybe you can have the parents help fix it up to use it also.

MK: I think we've been the benefactors of that as our kids got involved in things like basketball and volleyball and gone off to use high school facilities for events. So, it's worked out. (MK and GA chuckle.) It's come true.

GA: The parents, at night, come and use the facilities. That's what I thought. We would open up and you would bring everybody to the school, rather than just keep them away.

MK: So you're running for office in '54, campaigning through coffee hours and rallies. These coffee hours, how are they organized?

GA: I think that campaign, we had a few coffee hours. The party more or less put it together, but not that many coffee hours in the '54 election. I used the coffee hour very extensively later on, I think in the '62 and '63 election.

TC: I think it's 1966, Governor, relative to reelection after the Maryland loss. That would be 1966.

MK: So you did a lot of coffee hours at that time.

TC: It was in that period.

GA: In 1964, yeah? That election. The Maryland law came up in '63, and in '64 I was told by another senator. He told me, "Don't talk about the Maryland law, because you put us on the spot. We have to try to defend our position and we don't want to do that. You were chairman of the ways and means committee, so you talk about being chairman and you're going to get reelected."

I told him that I took a position that was very controversial. I think I have an obligation to go back to the people and to talk about it. Not only talk about that issue, but talk about the question of whether or not a party member had to go along with everything that the party wanted in the same way the party wanted to push it. Supposing you had some disagreement, you agree on the policy—land use reform—but you disagree in how they wanted to put it in. Should we not have the right to say we don't agree? That, to me, became an issue that's very important. I wanted to go back to the people and tell them what I did and why I did it and tell them I'm going to do it again, because that's the way I believe. So my standing as Democrat became an issue in that campaign also. That's why I told that person you won't see me at any party functions now.

[GA decided] our next thirty days, I'm going to have coffee hours. Every night, two coffee hours for me. I wanted enough time at each place. I spent about an hour at each coffee hour. Only for myself, nobody else, so we could talk about the policies I considered to be very important. I was so gratified that at the end of each coffee hour people came up to me and told me they didn't understand what the bill was all about and they were very grateful because I stood my ground to not have it become law. Then I had people who came up to me and told me that they disagreed with me on the issue, but they support me because I was willing to come back and talk about the issue. Sometimes you got to disagree with people. If you feel strongly, you got to disagree. That's, I think, very important for a person to feel strongly about any issue, being willing to stand up and disagree and having the courage to disagree when the odds are very strongly against you. So they told me they admired my willingness to stand up for what I believed to be right, and they also told me that they support me as a Democrat. Party members should also be able to do that.

MK: So that coffee hour was a very effective means in the 1960s after the Maryland land bill issue, yeah?

GA: Right. After that, the coffee hour played a very, very vital role for me. I said I'm very shy. I don't go around shaking hands too much. But when I go to the coffee hours, I sit down and I talk to people. They ask me questions. I was always told by people that I was most effective at the coffee hours where people had a chance to talk to me and I could tell them what I did. Why I did certain things. They would ask me about certain issues, and I would tell them what I felt about the issues and why I felt a certain kind of way. I tell them what the opposition was and how they felt. So it was not only my telling them what I believed, but I told them what somebody else believed so we had a different point of view. I'm not saying that they were wrong. I never said that somebody disagrees with me, they're wrong and I'm right. I understand if somebody else can feel in good conscience and feel very strongly that they are doing the right kind of stuff, and I respect that, but they got to respect my right also for me to feel and do what I feel is important, and for me to stand up on that basis. So, I think that that coffee hour, in many ways, made me feel and understand how people were thinking and talking.

MK: So it was a good two-way vehicle for you. I hate to bring you back all the time, but going back to '54, after you campaigned and you got elected and everything. You have the opening day of the leg[islature], what was it like for you and your family back then?

GA: I had never been to a legislative session before. The first time when I went to a legislative session was my opening in 1955 session. My parents—my father and my mother were both there. All of my children. . . . No, not yet.

MK: Not yet. [Nineteen] fifty-four, your freshman year. So you have yourself and your parents. What was it like opening day? Just kind of picture it and describe it for us.

GA: Very colorful. Lots of flowers and lots of pageantry and speakers. I was very quiet (chuckles) at first in the opening of session. Everything was scripted. We were given a script and were told certain something is going to come up, and somebody so-and-so is going to make the motion and so-and-so is going to second the motion. It was all put together that opening day. Lots of music and speeches. They were told who was going to speak and what they were going to speak about. When I think back now, I think about how excited my father and mother must have been. Just as I was excited because it was my first legislative session, I had never seen a session before. I had never been to 'Iolani Palace.

MK: What did you feel, being at 'Iolani Palace?

GA: When I was there, I felt a great sense of responsibility. Prior to that session opening and right after the election, I asked a question, "Gee, I'm fulfilling this, but what do I do now that I have the power? How do I go about bringing this fairness along?" I thought about that a great deal. I felt that I could help my friends in little ways, and that would be what I could do. But I thought to myself, "Hey, if I try to do that—take care of my friends—then I am going to do the same thing in a different kind of way the Big Five used to do?" I didn't want to do that, so I felt that fairness must not be helping my friends, but fairness must be helping everybody. Treating everybody fairly, friend and foe. Not only those who were for you, but those who were not for you also. If you didn't have that, you were going to continue to have a situation where we're going to have fairness for the people that we support, but forgetting about those who don't support.

So, that's the main thing I went through—affected me a great deal. So much so that when the first session opened, and the legislation for unemployment compensation ag[ricultural] field workers came up, I knew exactly what my position had to be. I tried to get it applied fairly to everybody—that the bill did not discriminate against certain people. The fairness issue came up at that point also.

MK: You know, when the session opened, you said it was all kind of scripted. So prior to opening day, had you folks met?

GA: Well, we had met about what was going to happen. But somebody else worked out the script—Charley Kauhane and his group worked it out.

MK: In those days as a freshman legislator—I know that nowadays the Legislative Reference Bureau help out the freshmen. They tell them this is how a bill is passed, this is where

you go to do this and that. But when you first started out as a legislator, how did you learn the ropes? How did you learn to be a legislator?

GA: We, I guess, stumbled. (Chuckles) Because, I had to learn the whole process. It was not only me, but all the new legislators. Dan Inouye, maybe he was more exposed to things. But Masato Doi, Russell Kono, and Anna Kahanamoku, maybe Spark—not Spark—and then me. I didn't know anything about how to legislate. Philip Minn, kind of old-timer. So, I was kind of a brand-new person who really didn't know what these legislative sessions—how the process was. We had some meetings of assigning committee chairmanships.

MK: How did that work? How was it organized?

GA: The Democratic caucus. Dan Inouye called a caucus together and we elected him as majority leader. We had the committee assignments made at that time. I don't remember even what assignment I had.

MK: Did you have a say? Express your interest?

GA: Yeah. We talked, but you see, for me I'm brand-new (chuckles). I was not very familiar about the process at that point, so I was more intent on kind of staying back and letting them lead. I would sit and come in and join whenever I possibly could.

MK: I know for the past, I guess it's been a practice where freshmen legislators in the house would get to all sit on the finance committee to kind of learn how things were done. But in those days, who sat on finance, who sat on different committees? Was there any sort of rule or. . . .

GA: I think we kind of looked at different people to provide a certain kind of leadership. We felt that a person like Spark should be judiciary committee chairman. We felt that Russell Kono should be on a committee that deals with the counties.

MK: Dan Inouye was majority leader.

GA: Majority leader. Charley Kauhane, speaker. That was not his choice, he just went along with it. (Laughs) Charley speaker, okay?

(Laughter)

MK: How about David Trask?

GA: David Trask. Nadao Yoshinaga become labor committee chairmen. David Trask, I'm not sure what—he was very vocal, very loud-voiced, back in those days, even in those days.

MK: How about Robert Kimura?

GA: Robert Kimura, he was—I think in many ways Robert Kimura, Stanley Hara, [Raymond] Kobayashi on the Big Island. . . . Kaua'i, begins with a Y. Yama. . . .

MK: Yama?

GA: Oh yes. Toshiharu Yama. He was going to begin a second term. But he was very quiet also. And myself. And I think, Anna Kahanamoku. We're kind of in a group where we didn't assert ourselves from the very beginning. As the session started to go by, the bills started to come up, then we started to look at bills.

MK: How about Toshio Serizawa?

GA: Oh, Toshio Serizawa was chairman of the finance committee.

WN: As an attorney, did you want to go toward judiciary, for example?

GA: No, because I felt that a person like Spark had been more exposed, and he was a lawyer also. So, when they talked about it, I just went along with it. For me, the start of the session was a learning experience. I wanted to learn so that I could participate effectively.

MK: What did you think of, say, someone like Vince Esposito?

GA: You know, I'm wondering where Vince fit in. I knew I had heard of Vince and knew of Vince because I had heard him at the rallies. But I knew him also because he had gone out to defend a group of Hawai'i boys who were indicted for the killing of a Japanese *yakuza* person. So, the name Esposito was kind of famous for me—well known fighting attorney. But I don't remember now where he served.

MK: How about Fernandes, [Manuel] Henriques—from Kaua'i?

GA: Henriques: (imitates voice) "Mr. Chairman, this is not justice!" (Laughs)

MK: (Chuckles) That was his statement?

GA: Uh-huh [yes]. Billy Fernandes, he knew how to get around. His father [J. B. Fernandes] was a senator also, so he had been exposed to the legislative process. But when it comes down to the legislature, after a while it comes down to a matter of trust. Who do you trust? Who can you depend on? Who can you believe will help you on bills that you feel very strongly about? So we had to make that kind of judgment quickly, and we did.

MK: Did the newly elected AJA [Americans of Japanese Ancestry] Democrats in the house kind of stick together?

GA: We didn't stick together as AJAs as such. But I think as newly elected ones, people came together.

MK: Who among the old-timers did you folks kind of rely on to help you folks?

GA: Not Charley Kauhane. I think we didn't really rely on anyone, except our group. I'm trying to figure out how. . . . We had twenty-two Democrats, and the Democrats split up fifteen [to] seven. The seven, we were complaining they were siding with the Republicans. They were concerned. Eight Republicans, seven [to] fifteen. Our fifteen. We were even concerned about (clears throat) going to lunch. We all stayed down in the finance committee and we waited and we saw them go out to lunch and we figured we can go have lunch also. (MK laughs.)

WN: Prior to '54, the Republicans were the majority. Do you remember some of the Republicans that were holdovers or survived the Democratic revolution? What was their attitude toward things? They started in a position of leadership and power and then all of a sudden they don't have it.

GA: Yeah. For example, in my district the sole survivor was Yasutaka Fukushima. In the fourth district, the sole survivor was Porteus, [Hebden] "Heb" Porteus. I got along well with Heb Porteus. I would tell my concerns, and he would tell me these concerns about legislation.

MK: How were you with Yasutaka Fukushima?

GA: Yasutaka, we all thought he was a very bright person, but we were concerned.

MK: He was an old-time attorney from the fifth district.

GA: Yes. We didn't have any real conflict with him, but we didn't go to him and he was not part of our group. We did not work closely with him.

Hiram Fong lost his first—first time he lost an election.

WN: What was it about Heb Porteus that made it have good chemistry between you and him?

GA: I heard him speak and he spoke a lot on almost all the issues that came up. I listened to him. I sometimes agreed partially, or where I disagreed I could understand why he was taking certain positions. So, he also felt that I was a very reasonable person, that I was not one-sided, that I would listen to reason. He would come up to me from time to time and tell me he agreed or disagreed or what his feelings were. In 1962, I was paid a visit by three people—Dan Dorman, Heb Porteus, and I'm thinking of this other person (Herman Von Holt). He was on the board of the First Hawaiian Bank. The three of them came to me. They asked me if I would join the board of First Hawaiian Bank. Heb Porteus was one of those people. I always think back and I think Heb Porteus must have been the one who suggested that I be offered, because he and I talked like that.

MK: So there was some degree of mutual respect that came from those early years?

GA: Yes. Right.

MK: In that first session, who were the ones generally that introduced the bills that were part of the Democratic reform platform? You were like a freshman, so I'm wondering, did you introduce any bills?

GA: Yeah. What we did was—bills were all prepared. We talked about the things we were interested in. The bills were prepared for us, and we all signed—all the Democrats—every bill signed by every Democrat.

TC: So at that time, were party bills a lot more important than they are now?

GA: They were not necessarily party bills in the same way that people consider party bills today. They were not bills that came to us from the party.

TC: Democratic majority bills, though.

GA: Yeah. That was what we as Democrats felt was important. That's the big difference. We [the party] never told the legislators what to do, what bills to support, and we left it up to the legislators to make the decision. Today we have that convention and few people decide on some issues they want, and they manage to get it passed. They want the legislature to adopt the measures also. I tell them, what about public hearing? Even when I was governor, I sent measures down and I always told the legislators to have public hearings on this. You can get both sides of it and you can clarify the measure a little bit better. That's what they did, and very often they didn't support it because the public hearings felt—not that they were against it, but the public hearings indicated flaws or difficulties with measures that were going to be passed. But today, the party—one of the things they're really upset about was they want the legislators, when the party sends them planks, they want them to adopt it.

MK: But that wasn't the case back in '54?

GA: And back in '54, we were all very active in the party, too.

MK: When we read about that '55 session, it seems like. . . . Like you said, there's that division between the fifteen and the seven in the house. You folks are not all getting along you know. (GA laughs.) Sometimes history books talk about Kauhane, saying things like, "This Japanese Diet here doing things," or making references to Pearl Harbor. What did you think back then of Kauhane's actions?

GA: They didn't bother me because that was, I felt, typical Charley Kauhane. That's the kind of person he was. I accepted him for the kind of person he was. It didn't bother me.

MK: Can you kind of elaborate what kind of person he was and how things were that session?

GA: Yeah. Charley was a politician in every sense of the word. He was very powerful because he knew what he wanted to do. He was very strongly supported by the ILWU. He knew how to put pressure on people, how to reach people. So in that way he was very powerful.

MK: How did he put pressure on people or reach people?

GA: Oh, he could talk about—you come from a district where you have lots of ILWU members or these kind of people and they're very supportive of his legislation, you're going to get hurt if you don't come along. I never told somebody that they had to come along. I only wanted the opportunity to make a presentation and tell them what I feel and it's up to them whether they went along. To me, that was the democratic process in the political arena.

To some extent, I see some of that beginning to happen. During the time that I was there, most of the time we were free to say and take positions and do what we wanted, and maybe Charley was the exception who tried to control us. But, Dan [Inouye] never told me, "Hey you got to come along because you're part of our group." We never thought like that, but today a lot of it is you become part of a group and you got to go along with everything they want.

MK: But you didn't feel like that in those days, so you could choose to differ even within that group of fifteen. Were there instances when you were differing from the others?

GA: Yeah. On the bill that came up at eleven o'clock one morning. That bill that provided for unemployment compensation. I was for the measure, but I wanted to be sure that it was properly written. I wanted to take a look at it and I wanted to have it deferred. Dan was the majority leader, so I went to him—natural thing for me to go. He told me that bill was being spearheaded, controlled in the house by Nadao Yoshinaga, so I should go see Najo.

I went to see Najo and he told me they were working on the bill, and he thinks it's okay, but he said he can't do anything about deferring it. It's all set in motion already, and he told me I have to go to [Robert] McElrath.

I went to see McElrath, and he told me it's all set and the vote on it is today. I told him that I supported the measure and I wanted to be sure that there were no errors in the measure, and he told me he looked at it very carefully, but if there are measures we can take care of it in the senate. But I told him that I'm not a senator and I've got to be sure when I vote on something. I've got to be sure that to the best of my knowledge that's what I feel I'm going to be very supportive of. He told me, "We vote on it today."

So I went back and reported that to Dan and to Najo, and I told them that I was going to make a move on the floor to have it deferred until the evening, that afternoon. So I did. I made a motion that the matter be deferred until the afternoon session. Quickly they called a caucus and in the caucus we started to talk about the measure. I was kind of heated up at that point, and I looked at [all of those present] the legislators. "Do you understand, can you tell me that it was certain you've examined it and there are no errors in this thing and we're going to achieve what we want to achieve?" Nobody could tell me, except Najo.

So we decided that we'd call Toshimi Sodegami in, the labor lawyer who worked on it, to ask questions of him. And we did. In the afternoon we had that session, we asked questions. I was satisfied and I voted for it in the evening session. But that's the one time that I felt very strongly about not having the freedom to do what I wanted to do, which was just [to examine] the measure.

MK: In those days, who wrote the bills? Nowadays you have house majority research or the legislative reference bureau that would actually help write bills. In those days, how?

GA: We had a legislative reference bureau at that point, and we had a lot of people from the university. The dean of the college of education, Crawford?

MK: Everly maybe, yeah? Hu[bert] Everly?

GA: Yeah. Japanese person at the university. He was a professor.

MK: Kosaki?

GA: Was it Miwa?

MK: Oh, Miwa.

GA: Yeah. Kosaki, Miwa. They came.

MK: So Dr. [Ralph] Miwa, Dr. [Richard] Kosaki, Hu[bert] Everly.

WN: Okay. We need to . . .

MK: Oh, okay. We'll stop for a little while.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: You were saying that in that '54 session there were people who could help write the bills. You were mentioning some of the names. Who are the UH people that came in to help write some of the bills?

GA: Hu[bert] Everly, who was [with] the education college. He was very active. Ralph Miwa was very active in coming to us. [Norman] Meller. And Bob Kamins. They were kind of experts in constitutional law and very involved with tax laws. We had all kinds of help—people from the university. I think Ralph brought in many individuals who could help us and talk to us. Whenever we needed help they would always tell us we can get someone to kind of help.

MK: In those days, how close were you to people like Dick Kosaki and Ralph Miwa?

GA: Very close, because they came to us. We talked to them. We had discussion groups about Hawai'i's future and the kind of things we needed to do to fix Hawai'i.

MK: When would these discussions occur?

GA: Whenever we felt a need or desire to talk to some people about what we were planning to do, what we were going to do. We felt it was important because I was this green kid. I needed—I had some ideas but I wanted to feel that some of the thoughts we had and directions we were thinking about were very sound, valid directions. So, these individuals became very important. We went to them. We asked them, "Can we get together? Can we talk about some of these things that are important?"

MK: So it was your group that went to them for help. You folks initiated?

GA: Yeah. I think sometimes. But they also came up with ideas and told us what they think we should be very concerned about. See, Dick Kosaki was very active in the university. Dick was a person who was very knowledgeable.

You know, another person we spent a lot of time with was Katsuro Miho. [Nineteen] fifty-five session, we knew Katsuro was a lobbyist for the chamber of commerce. But we all trusted him. We felt that we could ask him questions and he would give us straight answers. He would not be misleading us. So Katsuro Miho was a very important person during that '55 session.

TC: That's interesting, because Katsuro Miho goes back to the prewar, and to the war real strongly. I didn't realize he was still an influence at that time.

MK: Also, when you read about 1950s Democrats, they talk about the growing division between the Burns Democrats and the old Johnny Wilson Democrats. They will write that Katsuro Miho was part of Wilson's kitchen cabinet and close to Wilson.

GA: Really? I didn't know that.

MK: But for you folks, Katsuro Miho was one of the men you would go to for advice?

GA: That's right. Well, you see, I was not aware of the split—the fight between the Jack Burns and the Wilson group. Because, when I first started campaigning, I knew Wilson was there and I supported him. As the campaign went on, Frank Fasi jumped in and he was campaigning against Wilson, and we stuck by Wilson. So, I was not aware that Katsuro was part of that Wilson group and that group was against Jack Burns.

TC: Did you meet Johnny Wilson?

GA: No.

TC: You never met him? Just curious. His history goes way far back.

GA: I knew him when I was a kid, because when I had to walk from Wai'alae when I went to kindergarten there, Johnny Wilson had a home further up in the valley. I had known about that "man over there."

TC: Did you say hi to him?

GA: No, I never saw him.

TC: He was just this mythical . . .

GA: Yeah.

TC: I want to ask one little relationship question. I think this broad subject of the university was a very important subject, because these are like development of institutions. Quite often in the responses to your description of this or that, in that early time you talk about going to talk with Dan Inouye. It seems like you had a simple kind of straightforward relationship. Neither one of you were at that point burdened by fame or historic achievement, et cetera. What was going on between the two of you at that time? Could you just talk a little more?

GA: You see, I understood, even though I didn't know the process very well, but I understood that in order to get things done, you're going to have to come together. Somebody has to bring people together. I felt that Dan Inouye was a person who could help do that. So I supported Dan. During the next session, '57 session, Dan wanted to become speaker. I talked to Matsy about this—[Matsuo] "Matsy" Takabuki called Dan, Stanley Hara, and me together. We met and we talked about whether or not he had the votes and whether or not he was going to take us down a path and we're going to end up losing and get hurt because of that. We had that kind of conversation, but I looked upon Dan and I supported him very strongly, because I felt we needed a leader who could help. That leader was not

Kauhane, but a leader who believed in the policies that we believed in. The things that we want to have happen in Hawai‘i.

MK: Since you kind of opened up that time period, who was opposing Dan Inouye? He had you in the corner, and Stanley Hara. Did he have sufficient votes?

GA: No, that’s all he had.

MK: Oh?

GA: He was told he had many other votes, but the other votes he told us he had turned up not to be there. In that session, Esposito became the speaker. After Dan dropped out, it was between Esposito and Elmer Cravalho. Elmer was in there, but Elmer later on told me that it was a maneuver for him to get the finance chairmanship. He felt that for him to get finance chairmanship, he had to be for the speakership and lose to Esposito—he either become speaker or lose to Esposito so he can become finance chairman. Elmer was a very, very good finance chairman.

MK: Why do you say that?

GA: Because you see, in the ’55 session, I didn’t think Elmer had the guts, the courage to stand up and do whatever he believed in. He just went along. But in the ’57 session, when he became finance chairman and the way he became finance chairman, to me, was very impressive. When he told me later on, “I was not interested in the speakership. I wanted finance.” It was a way for him to get finance. I talked to him. Eh, he’s right, and he did it really well. He succeeded. And he got Dan Inouye knocked off in the process. So the two leaders are going to become Esposito and Elmer. Esposito becomes speaker. He’s going to become finance, and he became finance chairman. During the course of him being the finance chairman, I got very close to Elmer, because I respected him for his knowledge of the financial condition of our then-territory. I respected him for his willingness to take hard positions.

MK: For yourself, having supported Dan Inouye, was there a fall out?

GA: No.

MK: You were okay?

GA: Mm-hmm [yes]. To this date, Elmer and I remain friends and have good relations. If you ask Elmer today what he thinks about me, he will tell you that with all the things he has known, people he has known, the things that have happened, he feels that I have been the best governor.

MK: This relationship, again, is from way back in the [19]50s?

GA: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: Then keeping you in the [19]50s, I know that you folks were all these freshman Democrats. You said you folks stumbled. When you read about that time, sometimes you

folks made mistakes, procedural mistakes, or what do you remember about mistakes being made?

GA: I think some of the mistakes we made were some things that we wanted to do that we couldn't do. For example, on workman's compensation law. I don't remember all the particulars, but I know that Stanley Hara and I were concerned about portions of that bill, of the law. We were blocked every way. Every time we tried to do anything or say anything, we were blocked because we could feel the presence of the ILWU. So at some point we accepted that. We felt that we're just going to bump heads and can't do anything about it.

MK: So there are a lot of stumbling blocks in that session.

GA: That's right. But we got the tax bill that we wanted through. It was vetoed by then-Governor [Samuel Wilder] King.

WN: Speaking of the governor, Governor King, what kind of contact did you have with the governor at any time during this first session?

GA: Very little. I think we were kind of looked upon as an anomaly, you know? We were not going to be around very long.

WN: That's what you thought?

GA: Not us. I think the others.

WN: You think they thought that?

GA: Yeah. Even the Big Five, I don't think they felt that we were going to be around very long. They were going to get us next time.

MK: So they weren't taking you seriously.

GA: That's right. The tax bill, I remember when it came back, we didn't have the votes to override. We felt we had some Republican votes—Bernard Kinney. We were looking toward him, but we never had that.

MK: Is this the tax bill to remove the ceiling on the property tax? That one?

GA: No. You see, up until that time, we had compensation that they were going to tax. C and D tax, two percent. Broad tax applied to everything that happened in our community. Generally accepted by those who know tax laws as being unfair to the poor. Very favorable to the very wealthy people.

MK: So you wanted to repeal that?

GA: Yeah, we were going to change. So we had a change in the whole tax laws, but the tax bill was vetoed and we didn't have the votes to override.

MK: I've read that in that session, Governor King vetoed seventy-one bills.

GA: Lots of bills, yeah.

MK: So how did you feel? You spend the whole session. You come up with all these bills. You folks try your best to move it through, and then it all gets vetoed. What did you think?

GA: I felt that we would have another day, and I felt that the governor had the right to veto. So there wasn't very much that I could do about what he did. I had no influence over him, and I felt that next campaign we could talk about the vetoes.

MK: So the feeling was, wait for another day?

GA: That's right. That's why I think the statehood issue became very important to us. The statehood issue was the right to have our own governor who would be subject to the wishes of our people. Our ability to get judges appointed by our own governor who would be elected by the people. So those were issues that became very important in the statehood discussion.

WN: Going through these bills, getting them passed, and then having a governor veto it, at that time you really looked at it as being, "That's okay, we'll get them next time." That's really forward thinking. They were probably thinking it's just a one-time deal. They're going to be gone.

GA: That's right.

WN: That's very interesting for you to say that this is—we'll get them next time.

GA: Yeah, we couldn't do anything about it. He had that right, that power. So we couldn't do anything. I had no influence over him, and all of the Democrats had no contact with him. We just couldn't do anything. I don't remember a single time when the governor called in.

MK: So he had no presence at the leg[islature]? He didn't have like a liaison or someone?

GA: Zero. (Laughs)

TC: That is really interesting.

WN: That is interesting.

TC: It's a commentary on the importance of elected governor and statehood that I've never heard. Wow. I didn't realize. I just had that sense that King was remote, but oh boy. Sorry to interrupt, but. . . .

WN: When we think about you being former governor and how you probably had to keep track of bills and sort of contact certain legislators sometimes when it's necessary, but you're saying that didn't happen at all.

- GA: Yeah. Nobody from the administration—maybe I was just a small nobody—but nobody from the administration ever made contact discussing any bills we were considering to tell me it's a bad bill or anything like that. Absolutely no contact.
- MK: No cabinet members? No department heads? Nobody comes?
- WN: The executive branch and the legislative branch were totally going in different directions.
- GA: We had hearings on some measures that came up, like the finance bills. But most of the measures, I don't recall. I don't recall or remember any contact with any part of the administration.
- WN: Do you remember any kind of discussions that Charley Kauhane maybe had with the governor or the governor's people? As a leader?
- GA: I don't even think that they had that kind of discussion. (Chuckles)
- MK: We really learned how important it was for us to get statehood, yeah?
- GA: Yeah. I forgot to mention. Later on the university people, people like Walter Nunokawa got very much involved and put together groups of university people who came to me on various kinds of issues.
- MK: Governor, you mentioned that you have to make a call at twelve o'clock?
- GA: Ten, fifteen minutes late I'm okay.
- MK: It's okay? I was wondering, after having gone through all this in this session, in your mind what were the most important lessons you learned about politics from this session?
- GA: If you have something good, if at first you don't succeed, try try again. (Laughs)
- MK: How about most important discovery you made about lawmaking and the way government works?
- GA: During that time, what really struck me was the right that any person had to be able to stand up and say what they wanted to do and be recognized for that purpose. Nobody took it against you for having taken that kind of position. Now, on the Maryland land bill, before I took that position, I was told not to take a public position. They were hoping that they could change my mind if I didn't tell them what my position was. A few days before we were going to vote on the measure, I got word that Nelson Doi [senate president] told me that I had to come along or I'm going to lose the ways and means chairmanship. My response was, "Send somebody down to replace me." But that's the only time that I remember when I was told that if I didn't do something I would have to pay a penalty. Generally that was not the situation. Generally, we were free to speak up and say what we wanted and nobody held it personally against you for speaking up.
- TC: Let me insert a question Michi. You were the youngest of a young crowd. The more we talk, the more I'm impressed with how many old-timers were still there and then you're this really young element of the younger element. You were behind the veteran group

- even. Was there much made of that? I know the press noted that you were the youngest legislator. Do you think that you got a treatment which was maybe a little special recognition, but also like, “Kid, you get in the back row for a while.”?
- GA: Charley Kauhane, later on, expressed to many people that he was really hurt by me. I was in the same district as him, and not being more supportive than I was. I know also that somebody, that our group, always were pushing me along and feeding me information and feeling that I would be willing to stand up and say what I wanted to be said. Be critical if that was necessary.
- TC: So they were goading you to—could you explain?
- GA: Wanted me to be the person to go up and stand up and oppose.
- MK: How come? How come they’re telling you?
- GA: Because that’s what I used to do. I was willing to speak up in my own district and say things that I disagreed with Kauhane. So they felt that they would give me information, feed me information—more than I had to have—when they wanted me to speak up.
- MK: This would be on the floor?
- GA: Mm-hmm [yes].
- MK: Did they also encourage you to use your legal background and alter things?
- GA: No, because I think in our group we had so many lawyers. Masato Doi, Russell Kono, Dan Inouye, Spark.
- MK: But they would have you. (MK and GA laugh.)
- GA: Yeah, because they didn’t want to stand up against Charley Kauhane. (MK laughs.) I used to do that anyway, so you know.
- MK: Do you think it was your youth or naivety or what that allowed you to do that when the other guys wouldn’t do it?
- GA: Maybe it was because of my youth and being very naive and not being concerned about the penalty that I might have to pay. The penalty was, Charley would have come to me and gone to the ILWU and told them to not support me in the next election. They even had an ad in the newspaper against me, but I think that’s part of Charley’s work.
- MK: I don’t know if this really fits in, but you know, in Japanese culture they have this thing about *senpai*, *kōhai*. In this legislature, you had lot of *senpais*. Did you feel like a *kōhai*? Or, need to be like a *kōhai*?
- GA: No, I think I was just my natural self when I stood up and said things on the floor. When I disagreed I felt that I should be not afraid to tell Charley and take a position contrary to what Charley wanted us to take.

MK: You were saying that one of the weapons Charley Kauhane had was that he could always get the ILWU to withdraw support and to be an opponent to someone's election.

GA: Not only the ILWU, his power so to speak was quite extensive. For me, that's why I had. . . . Nineteen fifty-six election, nineteen fifty-eight election when I ran for the territorial senate, I didn't have support of the ILWU. I never had the support of the other unions.

MK: Did you really care if you won or lost a next election at that point? Did it matter to you?

GA: No. For me, I was there because I felt very strongly about some issues, primarily the fairness issue. I never felt that I wanted to be elected. I never felt that I wanted to become governor, and I became both because of Governor Burns. I think for me it was easy to feel that if I'm not wanted it's not difficult for me to step aside.

MK: It kind of gave you some freedom?

GA: Yeah. I think that not feeling that I have to be reelected, that I have to continue to be here. I think that made it possible for me to feel free and try to do the things that I felt I had to do.

WN: At this stage during the first session, did you confide at all with people like Governor Burns and Tom Ebesu while you're having some of these conflicts?

GA: Tom and I, we talked a lot during that period. I didn't talk too much to Governor Burns, because there was the Burns faction and Tom Gill faction and I was in between. In fact, Bert Kobayashi, Russell Kono, and I, and Alfred Laureta, one time during the 1956 election—before the election—tried to intervene and bring the Burns and Gill back together at least for the campaign. We were not successful.

TC: When you thought of the Burns faction, who did you think of as being closest to Burns? Who do you think was communicating with Burns? The way that communication spread and strategy and so on.

GA: Fat Boy?

TC: Who?

GA: What was his name?

WN: Okuda?

MK: Okuda?

GA: No, no.

MK: Aoki?

GA: Yeah. Dan Aoki.

TC: So Dan would come and talk with people? Who do you think Dan Aoki talked to particularly? Who do you think Dan Aoki would—if this was representing Burns how did that line of communication go?

GA: Almost everybody who ran for office was there. He was not afraid of going to talk to anybody. He was very vocal. Very strong language he used. (Chuckles) He knew exactly what he wanted to say—what he was saying to you.

TC: How did you feel about the way he presented himself?

GA: Well, it didn't bother me, because I was not affected in any way. Actually, Russell Kono, Bert Kobayashi, gave me a lot of strength. Especially after that first 1955 session when Fred Patterson passed away, and Bert and Russell came to me and asked me if I would join them in their law firm. And I did.

MK: Shall we end here? It's after twelve.

TC: It's only another five minutes.

MK: It's okay?

TC: People today don't really know about Bert Kobayashi, but he was very important in his time. Could you talk about Mr. Kobayashi?

GA: Bert Kobayashi was a person with really strong feelings, great principles. He was not in the legislative sense, but amongst his personal relationships with family and friends, he felt very strongly about how we did things. Things that we shouldn't be doing. For example, he was very upset that I was shooting pool sometimes. Too much pool. (GA and MK chuckle.) He let me know under no uncertain terms. But he was that kind of person. He and Russell Kono were very close together, because on the Mainland they were both black belt at judo. They went around, put on judo exhibitions.

When I joined, when he offered for me to come and we'd join, I spent a lot of time with Bert's family, Russell's family. We became very close together. Bert is a person with very strong feelings about family, about community, about individuals and what we do and what we don't do and how we go about doing things. How close we are with the family. He was a really close family person, but he was also very strong about the political process. He felt very strongly. That's why he was the one who suggested to go see Tom Gill and see whether we can get Tom to work closely with us. He found out that that's not possible and he accepted that.

When Governor Burns got elected, the first person he touched was Bert Kobayashi to become attorney general. When Bert told me that he had accepted, that was the first time I had heard he just got approached and he told Jack Burns he was accepting. I told him, "Bert, we never even talked about this." He said he knew it was going to be okay with us. He accepted and he told us why he accepted. He felt that that's a very honest person and he's going to do what he feels he has to do for Hawai'i. Burns needs him, and I want to help him.

- WN: This was in '62 when Burns was first elected governor? Kobayashi was attorney general?
- GA: He became attorney general, but he was the first person that Burns picked up. He felt he needed someone like Bert to be attorney general so he would do things in the right way legally.
- TC: Even more so, Russell Kono has sort of been lost to history. I wonder if you could talk about him and explain to us more who he was and what the feeling around him was and so on.
- GA: Russell Kono, his brother married Margaret Oda's sister. I forget what her name was.
- WN: Elaine, right?
- GA: Elaine. Elaine. Russell was very close to Bob Fujimoto on Big Island, that group. Bob was a Republican, but as a person they got along well together. Russell was physically very strong. He also felt very strongly—during the 1955 session he was one of the persons I really looked forward to seeing quite often. How he always—not really vocal. He didn't say very much but when he felt something he said so. That's the kind of person Russell Kono was. Quiet, but very strong. That's why I think Bert and Russell were initially partners in the law firm.
- MK: It seems like the three of you were kind of cut out of the same cloth, personality-wise.
- TC: While we're there, because this is sort of 1955 too, people today don't know who Alfred Laureta was. I wonder if you could talk about Alfred. Alfred was an unusual figure for his time.
- GA: That's right. I first heard of Alfred Laureta when I was still in high school, because Alfred was the then-territorial oratorical champ out of Maui. I heard him speak, and I was like, "Wow, I wish I could speak like that." He came back as a lawyer and he was looking about what he ought to do, and he was picked up by Kobayashi law firm. He was picked up before me. I joined after Alfred was picked up. Al and I, because we were the two juniors, we got to talk a lot. We got to do things together a lot. He and his wife, Evelyn, and Jean and I, we got together quite often. I had great respect for him.
- TC: Did he talk to you about what his experience was growing up Filipino? Sort of share that with you? Or it was more general community things?
- GA: Yeah, more general. More looking to the future.
- TC: Into the future, right.
- GA: But I was very lucky. Kobayashi, Kono, and Laureta.
- TC: I think it's a very remarkable grouping of people. And also, it seems to me that you weren't jockeying. This group wasn't jockeying for anything. It was like, these are people that things came to you because you had taken the kinds of positions you had. But you're not obsessed with power or. . . .

GA: Dan Inouye picked up Alfred Laureta to be his chief of—when he became congressman. Alfred went on to become a judge here.

TC: And labor director under Burns.

GA: Right.

TC: So everybody—Kono became a judge.

GA: Right.

MK: Shall we end here? I'm just worried about the time.

GA: Yeah. Got to make the calls.

MK: You have to make your call, yeah? Oh, Governor, today was really interesting because there hasn't been that much in terms of detail written about the '55 session. To just have you talk about it in terms of your experience, this is really good to have.

GA: The idea of fairness to me was very important during that period.

MK: So as we go along we can see the continuity. Next session we will continue. We want to find out about the law firm and how you balanced everything. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-18-9-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

June 27, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

GA: [Conversation in progress.] When I started off I worked in the McCandless Building. McCandless Building was on Bethel Street, between King Street and Merchant Street. You go down Bethel Street further, the corner there was Bouslog & Symonds office. That’s where Ed[ward] Nakamura [labor attorney and later Hawai‘i State Supreme Court Justice] worked. So I used to see Ed quite often. I used to see him in court from time to time.

TC: How was he in court? I’m curious.

GA: I never really watched him in court, but I used to see him around the courthouse. I would guess he would have been pretty good because he was a very bright person. Bright and very decent person.

When I first started practicing law, there weren’t that many lawyers. Now there are thousands of them. We knew who the lawyers were and we knew who we could trust. We knew who we could talk to and get some agreement, understanding, without anything in writing. To us that was very important at that time. There were some lawyers I never wanted to do that with.

TC: I heard some stories about lawyers in that period. Some lawyers walking around with yellow pads and doing little deals for settling claims, that sort of thing, just walking down the street.

GA: I could have made a lot of money in two places. One was representing people who got injured, automobile accidents and so forth. The other was the defense side of that. I started off doing the plaintiff side. Then I ended up doing the insurance side, defending. On the plaintiff side, instead of trying to get a large recovery and taking a big fee, I always looked at: What was my client going to end up with? Is he better off for me to work something out quickly so that I charge him a lesser amount for a fee? I always looked at the case from that point of view. What’s the benefit to the client? What service do I bring to him that makes it possible for him to get the best deal? So I never tried to maximize what I could get for the client and then get the big fee. It was always, what is the best I could get for my client. By doing that, I talked to lawyers on the other side, talked about the clients like this, “I want to help them as much as possible, get as much

money as I possibly can. What's the possibility? Where are you folks in terms of the insurance side?"

They would tell me very candidly, "With the policy limit, we can only pay—that's all we have."

I often talked about, "Can you offer that policy limit to us so that we can avoid trial?" By doing that, I'd take a small fee. Whereas today, they have an agreement to sign that says 80 percent or 40 percent, whatever the amount is, whether they spend, go to court, or whether they—the fees are so large, they get big fees taken out. But I always tried to work it out so the client got the best deal, minimize that, so I could have made a lot of money there but I didn't. I knew which lawyers I could talk to and I could trust and which ones were very difficult to work with.

MK: You mentioned in the beginning you would work to help the plaintiff, then later on you worked for the insurance companies. I was wondering, which insurance companies.

GA: Fred Patterson, when I went to him, he had a reputation of being a criminal lawyer. But he had been shifting that part to become kind of a civil lawyer, more in insurance. He was responsible for creation of Pacific Insurance [Co., Ltd.]. He and a group of people created Pacific Insurance. So when I went to Patterson, I did a lot of small work for Pacific Insurance at the beginning. But I started to get bigger work for Pacific Insurance. Then at one point, First Insurance Company asked me if I would be willing to serve on their board. My first board directorship was with First Hawaiian Bank in 1963, early '63. After that, I got appointed [in 1965] to the gas company [Hawaiian Gas Co., Ltd.], later on Pacific Resources [Inc.]. I was approached by First Insurance. It would be in the later part of, or middle part of 1960s, when I was asked if I would serve on the board. Boyd MacNaughton heard about that and he contacted me right away and he said, "Please don't serve because I am considering you for service on Hawaiian Insurance Guaranty Company board and as legal counsel for Hawaiian Insurance." He told me that if I got that, I would be the first outside director to serve on a C. Brewer board company. So I refused the offer from First Insurance and I accepted [in 1966] C. Brewer's Hawaiian Insurance and Guaranty [Co., Ltd.] and I became a director there and a board member.

MK: We got into this topic (GA laughs) but I guess we should have taped an intro first. You want to tape an intro?

TC: Go ahead.

MK: This is an interview with Governor George Ariyoshi on June 27. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto, Tom Coffman, and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. This is in Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i, session number nine. I guess for the formal interview, we're going to move you back in your mind back to the 1950s. Last time we opened up the conversation with 'Iolani Palace. The 1955 session opens at the 'Iolani Palace. I was wondering, growing up, what did you know about 'Iolani Palace?

GA: Almost nothing, except that I knew it was the home of royalty.

MK: When you started doing your legislative work at 'Iolani Palace, what did the inside of the palace look like? We know the Capitol. We don't know what the palace looked like.

GA: It's the same feeling I had when I went to Washington Place. For me, I was awed by the fact that I was working in a place where the royalty had their headquarters, where they lived and worked. I remember the first time I went there and I looked around a little bit, I saw the etchings on the glass—it's not etchings, really. It's sandblasted. I looked at the thing and I thought to myself, "Wow, they did this back in those days and they had the technology to do something like this." I was awed by the fact that we didn't give it any special treatment. It was just open. You could just pass through back and forth. Not secured.

MK: How did it accommodate all these legislators? How did you have offices in there? How was it set up?

GA: It was set up so that—now I don't remember. One side we called the throne room. I believe the throne room was a room that was used by the house of representatives. If you face the palace and you look towards the mountain, the palace is upstairs and downstairs, but the downstairs is fairly wide, a hallway separates the left side and the right side. The left side, I believe, was the throne room. That was used by the house of representatives. The other side was—I don't know what the name was but—used by the senate.

MK: Knowing that Hawaiian royalty once occupied the palace, how did you feel as a local Japanese American legislator in there?

GA: My first feeling was one of awe that being able to even step foot into a place of royalty. But to me, a real opportunity to work. I treated that place very sacredly, just as I did with Washington Place when we moved there. I thought it had to be treated with care. The house used the left side, known as the throne room, and the senate on the other side. When we did that, there were side offices on the balcony and the two offices in the corner. That was occupied by the speaker. Downstairs, we had offices occupied by house and the senate staff. I was really surprised when we started to build up. (Pause) No, it's the reverse. When I became a senator we were on the left side. When I was a house member we were on the right side. That's right. The finance committee was in the basement downstairs, judiciary committee. We used also, the old armory for committee meetings and our own personal offices. Only a few finance, judiciary, county committees were downstairs. The others were outside in the armory. On the left side was a senate staff and the senate meetings upstairs. That's how it was.

When they started to build up—you know the balcony area was open and then the two offices were here—when they started to build up this whole area, I became very concerned. We were taking an historical building, really one of a kind, the only kind of building that existed in the whole United States, and we were building on it. I was a little bit disturbed when we started to do that.

MK: When you say "building up," it was to build more offices to accommodate more people.

GA: Yeah, more space. Like the speaker's office, he wanted more space to build up some more. On this other side—I really don't know who uses the other side, other offices. The

committees occupied downstairs. I know that upstairs on the second floor level, it was more the speaker and senate wanting more space and building up that area.

MK: I never knew that the armory was also used.

WN: Where was the armory exactly? Do you know what's there now where the armory was?

GA: It's (pause) the armory was across Beretania Street. I think it's the Department of Health there now.

WN: Oh, the Department of Health building. So the corner of Punchbowl and Beretania.

GA: I remember walking across from the Capitol, across the street, and going to the armory building. The Capitol is bounded by Punchbowl and Beretania so across the street was the armory. So that section between Washington Place and Punchbowl, that's where the armory used to be. For me, the armory experience was having Saturday night dances there.

(Laughter)

WN: I was just going to ask you about those dances.

MK: People talk about that.

GA: All the schools, in fact. I know Farrington [High School] had dances. McKinley [High School], when they had big dances they went to the armory.

MK: When people used to say, "We used to have dances at the armory." I couldn't imagine it. But it's the same building that had dance space and later on provided office space.

GA: That's right.

WN: You're the first person to tell me where it was approximately and what became of it, what it was used for in later years.

GA: They had some very interesting bands. They were young people and some of them still in high school. Dr. [George] Takushi, he was one of the members of a band, too.

MK: Related to Jimmy Takushi?

GA: Yes, Jimmy's older brother was a very active member. As a matter of fact, many years later in his adult life, and he became very successful in his medical practice, he tried to bring the group together. He did and they performed. I don't remember what group it was, but some dance band they performed with.

MK: So Dr. Takushi brought back the original members.

GA: Yes, and they practiced at his house. He soundproofed his place right next to the Kaiser Estate.

WN: Kaiser Estate.

GA: Henry Kaiser built out at Portlock—I don't know the exact location there, out in that area. He built a house there, very beautiful big house. He had a big swimming pool. He had, beyond that, he had additional quarters—dog kennel. It was bought by two brothers later on. I can't remember their names.

MK: But Dr. Takushi lived in that neighborhood.

GA: Just beyond there, he lived there. He built his home and he built a room, soundproofed it so that a group can come and practice there.

MK: Did Jimmy Takushi have any interest or skill?

GA: He played clarinet, I know.

WN: How big were those bands in terms of membership? What was a typical dance band?

GA: I remember Ray Tanaka was the leader of a band. I remember Floyd Uchima and Floyd was a senior when I was a sophomore. Floyd later on became a member of the Royal Hawaiian Band. So that band was made up of many high school students. I think maybe they were all high school students because the older ones were all gone off to war.

MK: So back in those days, the legislators worked out of 'Iolani Palace and the armory and you needed the space to accommodate all the legislators and the staffers. In those days, what kind of staff did you have as a freshman legislator?

GA: Each of us had one person who was our assistant. Except for ways and means, judiciary committees, and county committee, there were no more than—the house was not ways and means. It was finance. I think the finance committee had a staff of four people. County committee, judiciary, maybe two. The rest of the other committees had only one person. I only had one person.

MK: Who was your one person?

GA: I don't recall now. I got to think about that (chuckles). I know at one time I had Harriet Joesting.

MK: That's the historian Ed[ward] Joesting's wife, yeah?

GA: Right. Very smart girl, very good in the personnel side of civil service.

WN: Did you have free rein to hire who you wanted or were they assigned to you?

GA: We had free rein to hire who we wanted. Now, the staffing for the rest, the general staffing for the house, everybody participated, making recommendations.

MK: What did your staffer do that first session? What did they take care of?

GA: Got the committee reports from various committees together. In order to help prepare for the session, the session was going to get started. We needed to have somebody who can put together the whole agenda for the day, all the bills that are going to be taken up, put together in order so that we could just follow it very nicely.

MK: In those days, that person would be working part-time, too? Just like you were?

GA: No. That person was full time. Oh, I know who I had. I brought my secretary, Nancy Okazaki over. She worked for me, keeping track of all the bills.

Our committee's function—we had somebody who came with background so that all the committees would be handled in the same kind of way. We had a roving group of people who was assigned to committee meetings. I don't recall what my committee—it was an innocuous committee anyway. I don't recall having very many meetings. I wonder if my committee was military affairs committee (chuckles).

MK: I was doing some reading about that '55 session. It seems like [Speaker] Charley Kauhane instead of sending bills out to the usual committees for review, he would just set up something called a select committee for certain bills and it would just be composed of people that he . . .

GA: Right. Not only that, he held up bills that came back. If he didn't like it right away, he'd hold the bills up. It didn't go through the normal process. If, for example, county committee came out with a bill that they looked at and had a hearing on it and [sent] a committee report to the speaker's office, sometimes we didn't see the committee report for a long time. Maybe some committee reports never came out.

MK: What did you think of this way of operating?

GA: Well, I didn't know any better. I thought that was the normal way. But from time to time, I objected. I stood up and I was very vocal. I objected on the floor to some of the things that were being done. I remember Masato Doi one time giving me some information. Kind of had me (chuckles) . . . Because I kind of developed the reputation of being very outspoken during that session and not being afraid to speak up. That's what Charley Kauhane told later on, told somebody, that what hurt him, more than anything else, was a person in his own district who stood up against him more than anybody else did.

MK: What made you do that?

GA: Well, I guess because I felt very strongly about the responsibility. I had to do the best job that I possibly could do. Just like I looked at the bill that came up on unemployment compensation for ag[ricultural] workers. I felt very strongly that I wanted to be sure that the right bill didn't create a lot of problems and I wanted to review it very carefully. I was willing to speak up and I was willing to make a motion to defer it.

MK: How about the other freshmen legislators? Were they maybe more reluctant to speak?

GA: Yeah. Elmer, for example, became a very powerful person after the first session. But, during the first session, he was very quiet. There's a difference between night and day

between Elmer Cravalho that first 1955 session and the session that followed. Elmer was very bright, very strong, knew exactly what to do. He could count votes.

When I was in the senate—that was 1965 because I was senate majority leader at that time—reapportionment legislature was before the federal court. The federal court had indicated that they were going to stop and do something unless we did something with reapportionment, reapportion ourselves. It meant that Maui County was going to lose a senator. Very likely, Senator Duarte was going to lose his seat. So they talked about the reapportionment bill. I didn't have enough votes to get the bill through. Because the vote that I needed was John Duarte's vote, and if he voted for it, he would've voted himself out of office, eventually that would have happened. So one day—we used to go out, on the palace *mauka* side, on the stairs. We all sat there together. One day I sat there. Elmer came and he sat down and he asked me, "How things coming along?"

I told him, "Okay, except for . . ."

He said, "I know what the 'except' is. Reapportionment?"

"Yeah, that's right." I said, "I don't think I can get it passed."

He told me, "You have the votes."

"No Elmer, I don't." I told him who had the votes.

He said, "You have the votes. Let me take care of it for you." He didn't tell me what he was going to do but when he told me he was going to take care of it, I figured he's going to talk to Duarte but he can't get Duarte's vote. So I thought he might be looking at some votes that I didn't count on. He called me back. He told me, "You got the vote now."

I said, "Which one is that?"

He said, "Uncle John [Duarte]."

I said, "You got Uncle John's vote?"

He said, "That's right." I don't know what he had or what he did to get that vote, but it was a vote that would have gotten him. He acknowledged that he was going to get out of office. But Elmer was that kind of person. He was great at details. He knew every person.

After the Maryland bill was defeated, he made a remark to someone that he knew it was going to be defeated. He knew what my position was going to be. He said if they had worked it right, they could have gotten my vote.

I saw him one day and I told him, "Elmer, you're right on everything else that you have tried to do but you're wrong on your assessment of the Maryland bill and my vote. There was no way you were going to get my vote." (Chuckles)

MK: How do you suppose Elmer Cravalho was able, that kind of vote getter, counter, leader?

GA: He's very smart, very good on numbers. That next session, 1957 legislature, there were three people vying for the speakership: Elmer, Vincent Esposito, and Dan Inouye. Dan thought he had the votes. The first vote, Dan was out and it became Elmer. Vincent Esposito and Elmer put up a real fight. Then at the end, he gave up to Vince Esposito. He made a deal with Vince Esposito. He would take the finance chairmanship. When he became finance chair, he told me, "This was what I wanted. I didn't want the speakership. The speaker, he's not powerful. I control the house now." He did from the finance committee he virtually dictated what was going to be happening in the house.

That's when I got very close to him because he trusted me and he felt that he could depend on me. Once we talked about what had to be done to get the budget and things through, he felt he could count on me and he could not count on very many people. He felt he had to put pressure on them. He never had to do that with me. He always talked to me about it, later on. "The one vote, when I felt that I got a commitment, was from you. When I got it, I knew I didn't have to worry after that." That's how he and I became very close.

MK: He has the reputation as being a skilled politician.

GA: When I became a senator, and he was still in the house, there was a contest for the speakership between Walter Heen and Elmer Cravalho. Walter claimed that he had the votes. He told everybody, "Oh, yeah. I got the votes already. This is in the bag."

I saw Elmer at Ciro's one night, Ciro's, that restaurant there. I said, "Elmer, how you coming?"

He said, "Everything is under control."

I told him, "You mean about speakership?"

"Everything's under control." So I knew exactly what he was telling me. He's got the votes. This other side talking about how they have all the votes lined up. When the votes went through, Elmer became the speaker. He was very attentive to details, attentive to what people are thinking.

MK: Was it something that he mostly did by himself or with staff?

GA: No. It was Elmer. That's why when he became mayor [1969–1979], very strong mayor, very effective mayor. That's why I was surprised when he lost that one election to [Hannibal] Tavares, I think it was. He lost that one, mayoral election. He retired after that.

MK: We keep on taking you back to your first year, but I'm wondering, after your first year in politics, how were your thoughts on politics and government affected?

GA: That you can make it work. That's how things get done. It gets done in the legislature, more than the executive because that's where the policies, the laws, are passed and adopted there. I had great faith in the process but I felt it was very important to be vocal, to speak up, to say what you think has to be done.

MK: In those days, like you would say, “Oh,” you would meet—you would see Elmer outside on the steps or at a restaurant or somewhere and discuss something. How much of government was being done at the palace or how much was being done outside?

GA: A lot outside because that’s where the conversation took place. It was not a formal meeting and you didn’t have to talk about it but based upon the contacts that you make, and people that you know, and the trust that you have developed, when you see someone outside, you’re going to talk about what’s in that person’s mind. A lot of times you didn’t get in legislative session a particular bill or a particular action that is being of great concern to the people and so they talk.

We didn’t have a Sunshine Law [open meetings law] back in those days so we could talk fairly freely (chuckles) about things that we felt. A lot of it was done, decisions made, because of that kind of conversation outside where you could freely talk about what your concerns were, what you’re trying to do, where the bottleneck was, who the bottlenecks were, why they didn’t want to go along with certain kind of things, or why people were pushing certain issues.

WN: Speaking of sunshine laws, I was just wondering, at that time, that early session, were there any community activists who were thorns in your side, who were trying to get things done through the legislative process?

GA: Very little independent groups except maybe there were banks, businesses, utility companies, the party platform. But back in those days, the party didn’t tell you very specific details of how to vote. There were very broad statements of principles and policies as a party.

WN: Back then do you remember it being mostly lobbyists or was it mostly people just coming from the community to come and see you and talk to you about certain things?

GA: It was more individuals. We didn’t have very many paid lobbyists back in those days. Individuals, businesses are coming to us concerned about certain measures. ILWU was very concerned. Big Five was still very active and would come and talk to us.

The thing about the Big Five is, when I campaigned, first got involved, I thought they were really bad people, everybody, all for themselves. I found out that within the Big Five, there were people who were very concerned about the community also. More than just business, they were concerned about fairness and equal opportunity.

WN: Do you remember some of those from the Big Five that came to see you?

GA: Eichelberger.

WN: Harold Eichelberger.

GA: Yeah, Harold Eichelberger. Walker.

WN: Henry Walker.

GA: Yeah, Henry Walker. MacNaughton. I remember his calling a group together and having some dinner together where he talked a bit about the community and the business. Boyd MacNaughton became a very close friend of mine.

TC: Any of the Dillinghams?

GA: Lowell Dillingham. Lowell Dillingham I got to know and understand and trust. I could talk to him and I could feel that he would be talking to me straight.

MK: So being in office, the Big Five had a more human face attached to it?

GA: Mm-hmm. I'm doing a terrible injustice to some of the other people I've not mentioned because I can't think of their names now.

MK: But there were individuals within this group that we would just call the Big Five.

GA: Yes. There were many of them. We looked upon them as kind of like demons. They're bad people. But I found out that was not always the situation with every person there.

WN: As someone not closely tied with the union—you know you have, for example, Alexander & Baldwin, which was pretty much a Maui based company—did you have a sense that they came to talk to you rather than coming to talk to somebody like Najo [Nadao Yoshinaga], who was representing that island?

GA: Yes. I think I was approached directly, maybe more than most other legislators were because they felt that I was approachable. That first session, [Hebden] "Heb" Porteus and I developed a very close relationship. He could talk to me; I could talk to him. I think Heb must have indicated to his business contact, "Ariyoshi is a person you can go and talk to. He's reasonable." So I think I have that kind of contact. Many people came to see me.

TC: What was it about Porteus that you were comfortable with? What do you think the basis of your . . .

GA: It's what he said on the floor. It's my agreeing with some of the things he said on the floor. So because of that, "Eh, Heb you mentioned this." And we started talking initially. From there that's how it developed, a relationship. I didn't believe everything that he said on the floor because I knew he was trying to be persuasive and pulled to that point of view. I could almost sort out that which was political and that which was not.

TC: Were there other Republicans who you talked to other than Porteus?

GA: There weren't very many Republicans.

MK: How about Yasutaka Fukushima since he's your district too?

GA: I never really developed that kind of relationship with Fukushima. I think he was kind of aloof from all of us. I think most of us felt that he has been there a long time and feels, maybe, he thinks he's better than the rest of us. I think that's how my legislative, first-time people, viewed him as. But they acknowledged him as smart.

TC: Was there any feeling that a person like Fukushima had sort of sold out to the old order and that there was some friction between the Democrats and the Republican AJAs? I know there were a lot of Republican AJAs that we don't really hear about much anymore.

GA: I think Fukushima, in this case, it was a different set of circumstances that made him present there. I think his law practice. He had a good law practice. When he said something, when he spoke, we listened because we acknowledged that he was smart. We were willing to listen to see whether or not what we were doing was actually the right kind of things to do.

That's what I think is important about dissent, people having different point of views. It gives you an opportunity to look at what you are doing and for you to reevaluate and ask the question: Am I doing the right thing? Is there validity to what is being said, criticism being leveled at us? That's how I think people who have different point of views can be very helpful in that process. To ignore them is to try to operate in a vacuum and we're going to make many mistakes we could have avoided if we had not ignored them.

MK: In those days, what did it mean to be a Democrat? So-and-so is a Democrat. So-and-so is a Republican. At that time, in your mind, what did it mean?

GA: I think it meant that we were anti-Big Five. I think the Big Five was the defining factor in the 1954 election. They were the ones who controlled everything. They controlled not only the plantations, but they controlled through interlocking directorates many—the banks, Lewers & Cooke. You know, for example, Bert Kobayashi, he was working for Lewers & Cooke. I know how competent a person Bert is, very thorough and he knows how to get things done. But at Lewers & Cooke he worked up to a certain level and that's all he could go. He couldn't get above here. That's why Bert decided he would leave Lewers & Cooke and he went to law school and became a lawyer. That's what the whole community was. Even when Henry Kaiser wanted to come here, the Big Five were very concerned about a big organization like him coming here and maybe losing some of the controls that they had. So they put a lot of roadblocks. And in this way, made it more difficult for him to come through. So to me, when I think back now, the defining factor was the Big Five that separated everybody. Because actually, the Big Five is not only the Big Five. Almost everything that has happened underneath there, all the interlocking directorate that they had, Bert Kobayashi was really the one who broke up that interlocking directorate.

MK: Before you ran for office in '54, how did you vote? I'm just curious. Before you went into office, how did you vote?

GA: I'm trying to remember if I voted.

(Laughter)

See I came back in '52. I know. I voted for Matsuo Takabuki (laughs). Because Tom Ebesu was handling his campaign and I got a little bit involved in the Pālama Settlement area. I don't remember voting for anybody else (chuckles).

WN: I'm wondering, by saying being a Democrat was in essence anti-Big Five, so when the Big Five did come to talk to you, what were their concerns?

GA: They were concerned about workman compensation issues. A lot of it, the conversation started with Stanley Hara. Stanley and I became very close because he and I were willing to look at legislation from a non-union point of view. Whereas, I don't know about the others, but I know that we were not willing to go along just because the ILWU said something, or the other union said that they wanted something.

MK: How come you and Stanley Hara became close? He's from the Big Island.

GA: I don't know how we came close together but it just happened. I was senate majority leader in 1965 that session, COPE, the carpenters' union and the other unions, got a person by name of Bob Knight who became their lobbyist.

TC: That was in 1965.

GA: Yeah. Bob Knight came and I met him. I was coming down the steps from 'Iolani Palace, when I said, "Hi," to him, he came back to me, right after that, and he said, "Can I come back and see you to talk to you?"

I told him, "Sure."

At that time, he came to see me. He told me, "I wanted to talk to you about our legislation, the bills that we're in favor of. I'll try to tell you what they are." He explained the bills to me.

I told him my frank opinion. If I were not in favor of it, I would tell him, "I'm not in favor of the thing because," and I gave him the reasons why.

Later on he told me that he really appreciated me. He said when I said "Hi" to him—he had been told by other union people, "That Ariyoshi, he's a hot-headed kid. He thinks he knows it all. Don't waste your time talking to him."

But he said, "When you said, 'Hi,' to me, just to say 'Hi' to me, struck a note so I wanted to come and talk to you. I came to talk to you and I was really so happy to have a chance to talk to you because you didn't go along with everything we wanted. You told me why you're for some things, why you were against some bills." He said, "To me, that's very important. I'd rather have a person in the legislature who tells me why they're against something and give a reason for being against it, rather than someone who tells me, 'Oh, if you're for it, I'm for it. If the union is for it, I'm for it.'" He said there were many legislators who were like that. "All we had to do was tell them these were the bills we are for." And they knew that they're going to get support. He said, "I personally, I want somebody who will think and exercise judgment on the basis of what he or she thinks is going to be good, because sometimes, we may want you to think against somebody else who might want something."

- At that time, he told me when he talked to me, he said, "I'm going to go and get an endorsement. I can't tell you I'm going to get an endorsement but I'm going to try to get an endorsement." And the 1966 election, first time I got endorsed by COPE.
- TC: COPE is Committee on Political Education for the AFL-CIO.
- MK: So that was a big one. That's a big endorsement.
- GA: I think that kind of explains my whole feelings about how one should be, legislate, you know?
- MK: When you hear about people who go into politics there's that aspect where once you're in office, you become kind of obligated, maybe, to some people. How was it for you in the early days?
- GA: I never felt obligated to anybody because the people who worked with me never talked to me about wanting—even when I became governor, the people who supported me never came to see me and told me, "Oh, you've got to do this. We supported you because of this." The message I got from them is: We trust you; we put you there; you do what you can, what you think is best for us.
- MK: I'm wondering, how did all this having to campaign, having to do legislative work, having to run your law practice too—this is back in 1955—how did all this affect your life? How did you manage?
- GA: I became busier because I had to take sixty days in the legislature and catch up. In those days it was a very clear demarcation between legislature and when we start working in our law practice. So I concentrated hard on my law practice because that was my first love. I wanted to build up a law practice.
- MK: So being a legislator, did it hurt your law practice? Did it help? How did it affect that part of your life?
- GA: It didn't help me because I never let the law practice part interfere with my legislative part. I didn't feel that I was doing anything in the legislature that would affect my law practice and vice versa. So I treated two separate . . .
- MK: And then . . .
- GA: Then I was asked by Bert Kobayashi if I would come and join him. I worked with Russell Kono and I got to like and work very closely with Russell. After the 1955 session, Fred Patterson died shortly after that. So, I was approached to join a law firm, a small law firm—Russell, Bert Kobayashi, Alfred Laureta. I became the fourth member.
- MK: So, '55, a lot of changes in your life.
- GA: And I got married. (Laughs)
- MK: And you got married. So we're going to segue into your marriage. You got married in 1955 and you met Jean in 1952. Around there? Or '53?

GA: Maybe '53.

MK: Fifty-three. How did you meet Jean?

GA: (Chuckles) My story or Jean's story?

WN: We have Jean's story.

(Laughter)

MK: Yeah, we have Jean's story. We want to hear yours.

GA: I was invited to Muraoka Department Store, and they had a party. Young AJAs, young lawyers, young business people. They had invited Wakaba Kai sorority. Jeanie was part of Wakaba Kai so she was invited to that party. I had a date and I had gone there. I just happened to go to the kitchen. Jeanie just happened to come by the kitchen just about the same time too. I saw her and I had recognized her. I thought she was—somebody told me that she was Yoshimi Hayashi's cousin. [Yoshimi Hayashi later became a Hawai'i Supreme Court Justice.] So my first approach to Jeanie was, "Are you related to Hash?" That's how the conversation started. So we talked. She explained how Hash was related to her and we started to talk.

She had heard—I'm trying to think of the name. At the university she had heard about me from a person who was two years my senior, who was at McKinley. Peggy Arita. Peggy Arita was working at the university at that time and Jean was there. Peggy told her, "There's a tall young man. Lawyer, you know. Just passed the bar exam." So Jeanie had heard about me but never met me.

So when I asked about her related to Hash, from that conversation it started up. There were friends of hers. They were going to go home already. So I asked Jeanie, "Could I have a dance?" We danced quite a few numbers, you know.

If you talk to Jeanie, Jeanie will tell you, when we went on the dance floor, it was a jitterbug piece and she thought, "Oh, this guy, he cannot jitterbug." (Laughs) She was surprised that I could—mine was the Lindy Hop, which I learned in Minneapolis.

WN: The what hop?

GA: Lindy Hop. It's not fast as jitterbug but it was fast dance, swing dancing. So from there she left. I called her to go to a [Honolulu] Japanese [Junior] Chamber [of Commerce] dance. I think it was a coronation ball or some kind of [Honolulu] Japanese [Junior] Chamber [of Commerce] dance. I called and invited her. She told me later on, "Good thing you called because right after you called somebody else called me."

(Laughter)

WN: When did you call her? The next day?

GA: About four or five days later. I didn't want her to think that I was pushing her.

WN: (Chuckles) I was wondering, you told me that she knew about you. What did you know about her besides being Yoshimi Hayashi's cousin?

GA: Only . . .

MK: Okay. Change tapes. So we're going to hold that thought.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay. What did you hear about Jean other than the fact that she was Yoshimi Hayashi's cousin?

GA: I think I first saw her picture in the paper. She had something with *Ka Palapala* beauty pageant. I thought, what a pretty girl. (Laughs)

WN: Well, Wakaba Kai and *Ka Palapala*. That's a good combination. That's very impressive. (GA laughs.)

MK: After your first date, four or five days later, how did the relationship progress?

GA: I think I never dated anybody after that.

MK: What kinds of activities did you folks go to?

GA: Lots of people—friends' parties. I went to picnics with her, her summer school picnics. I had a car so I became a chauffeur to some of her friends (chuckles). But I think very personal. Then, during that period also, Jean became mistress of ceremony on a television program. Ken Okamoto started a program and she was on that program [*Club International*]. What I remember so clearly about that program is she asked me one day [to be in a commercial]—they didn't have anybody to eat saimin. They had saimin commercials so she asked whether or not I could be in a commercial eating saimin. So I did. Nothing was said about who I was; and I was already in politics at that time. Many years later, I told Jeanie, "Hey, Jeanie, I don't think you paid me for being on that commercial."

(Laughter)

That was the nature of her program. They got people to do things for free. It was a low-budget program. Talent they got from various kinds of people.

MK: Was it a live show?

GA: Yes, it was a live show.

MK: You couldn't mess up then, yeah? Eating the saimin.

GA: No. I think I ate the saimin nicely.

(Laughter)

WN: Did you have any speaking part?

GA: No.

WN: Okay.

(Laughter)

You didn't get paid but you got a free saimin.

GA: Yeah, that's right. But that's cheap labor. (Chuckles)

MK: You mentioned that by that time, as you got to know her, you got into politics. What was her involvement in that first campaign?

GA: She got very much involved. Her family got involved. She helped put up posters. It was a very short period of time from the time I decided to run and from the time of the election. By the way, on primary election day, she didn't vote for me (chuckles) because she was not old enough to vote. Her birthday was October 30. So after the primary, she could vote for me. She made the November deadline by a few days.

MK: What kind of posters did she put up?

GA: We had a low-budget campaign. We had posters maybe a foot by two feet, with my picture and running for the house, Democrat. My parents went around putting up posters like that. My mother-in-law and Jeanie helped do that kind of work.

MK: I read in Mrs. Ariyoshi's book that your posters said: The fighting lawyer from Kalihi. Who came up with that?

GA: I don't know. It wasn't me. (Laughs)

MK: What kind of photo?

GA: I wonder whether or not—you know Ray Milici? That first campaign, the Democrat party had hired—I think the firm was Beam and Milici. They did all the work for the Democratic party, for the candidate, all went to them. I think they were the ones who put my brochure and my poster together.

MK: So not so low budget then, yeah?

GA: Oh, very low.

MK: Very professional company.

GA: My first campaign, those posters maybe cost me \$150. The small card with the football schedule on the back, I don't think cost me more than \$100. I had four ads in the paper before the primary and after the primary. They were small two-column by one-inch. I think the cost of that was \$15 or \$16. So I don't think I spent more than \$150 or \$200 for that. My total campaign, my first campaign, cost me no more than \$500.

MK: Where did the money come from?

GA: My parents, my own money from my parents; they had monies for us. I know, then we had banners in those days. We had a service station on Kalihi—I can't remember the name of the people. They printed the banners for me. All done at the shop, but they did it by themselves. Somebody made the outline and made the—what do you call?—the frame.

TC: Silkscreen.

GA: Yeah. Then they put that right on, the cloth. They silkscreen it right on. So I never had a single penny in campaign funding donation other than people who helped that way. Nineteen fifty-four, I didn't have any campaign funds.

MK: Jeanie and her friends and relatives helped. I was curious, in terms of politics. Where did the Hayashis stand? Mr. Hayashi.

GA: Mr. Hayashi died right after the primary election. So he was not alive at the time of the general election.

MK: Was he a Democrat or Republican?

GA: I don't know. But if I were to guess, I would say he was more Republican because his friends were Republicans. His friends in Wahiawā that he knew were Republicans.

MK: How did he feel about you and your candidacy?

GA: Oh, he was very overjoyed at my running and he was very happy about my running, very happy that I was going to marry Jean.

MK: Tell us about your engagement. How it was done. Your parents.

GA: My parents were very traditional. So we had a *baishakunin*, a go-between person that my parents appointed, and asked that they appoint somebody who was a go-between person for the other side so they could get together and talk about the wedding and things that had to be done. When we finally went to ask for Jeanie to get married to me, Jeanie had already [accepted]—I had proposed and she already agreed to marry me. But we had to go through the formal ceremony of my family and us going up to the house and asking for Jeanie's hand in marriage. We had to take *yuinō*. I remember they packed an envelope with some money. I don't know how much. The *yuinō* and fish. Jeanie's family and my family all coming together. We had to go to their house, Jeanie's house, to do all of this. They said okay.

(Laughter)

TC: I'm curious. Do you remember who your family's go-between was?

GA: Mr. Motosue.

TC: Who was that?

GA: Mr. Motosue was a pig and dairy farmer. He was from Fukuoka. He came from the village that my parents came from. So my father and Mr. Motosue knew each other because of that old family background.

TC: That's interesting. How about Jean's representative? Who was that, do you remember?

MK: I think in the book Mrs. Ariyoshi had included the name Shintaku.

GA: Ah, yes! Shintaku, that's right.

WN: Shintaku from Wahiawa? Oh, that's a really prominent name out there.

GA: Yes. In fact, Shintaku boy became judge, lawyer and a judge at one time, yeah?

MK: Was it Harold Shintaku.

GA: Harold Shintaku, right.

MK: So same family.

TC: How did you feel about this combination of your contemporary romance with Jean, then you mix it very traditionally. How did you feel about it?

GA: I felt it was a natural thing for me to do, normal thing. Because I had been exposed to, you know, that's what everybody else did during my time.

TC: So it was a very comfortable thing to do.

GA: Yes. Especially because I had no fear that they're going to say yes. (Chuckles)

TC: What if they had said, "No you're going to marry somebody else."? (Laughs)

GA: It would not have happened. Back in those days, if it was—they already knew that was going to be okay.

MK: That was kind of an interesting combination. Sort of like an American-style courtship topped off with a formal Japanese . . .

GA: And on top of that, during those days, I think just before the actual wedding, the bride's family would deliver to the groom's home *tansu*, a trunk. You know, *tansu* is a Japanese...

MK: Chest of drawers.

GA: Yeah. Furniture, and a trunk.

TC: Do you still have that *tansu*?

GA: No.

TC: Jean's family—in her book she describes her family going through a real crisis during the war because her father was a photographer. How aware of that were you in your early relationship? Was that something that loomed as a hard time that Jean had been through or was it just a life-goes-on type thing?

GA: No. I kid, "I married Jeanie because I thought she was rich." (Laughs) But she wasn't.

(Laughter)

I think even though we had all the traditional things, with Jean and me, I think we met and we got along together and we did everything without wondering what was going to be happening.

MK: When it came to the actual wedding, where did that take place?

GA: I had already gotten elected. American Chinese Club.

MK: Your reception.

GA: Yeah, reception at American Chinese Club. We got married at Central Union Church and the reception at American Chinese Club. [Matsue] "Matsy" Takabuki was the MC. I don't remember anything else except [Matsy] saying to Jeanie, "I just want you to know that if you don't take good care of him, somebody else is going to be wearing the fur coat." (Chuckles) Or something to that effect. Matsy might say, "Jeanie remembers it very clearly."

MK: At that point, what was your relationship with Matsy Takabuki?

GA: Because in 1952, Tom Ebesu was involved in his [Honolulu Board of Supervisors] campaign. I kind of got involved, very minimal amount of involvement. But in 1954, Matsy was very helpful in my campaign. After the primary, he got involved. When he found out what was happening to me with the ILWU and how they were insisting on campaigning with one brochure only, and no personal brochure, Matsy became very concerned about that. Matsy called me and told me that he wanted to help me. He assigned some of his key workers in 'Ewa and Waipahu and his own brother in Waialua was assigned to help in my campaign.

MK: So your relationship had developed from about that time.

GA: That's right. I admired Matsy as a person willing to—you know, he was campaigning also. He had only been elected one time, one or two times. For him, the ILWU was very important in that district. Matsy, for a young kid, he didn't know me. He heard about the problem I was having and he stepped in. He was willing to alienate some of his political following. So I really respected Matsy for that. I got to respect Matsy not just for that, but as a person who in his law practice was very strong, bright, and willing to do what he had to do and did that when he became city councilman also.

TC: Let me ask one question. When you were in the '55 session, '57 session, et cetera, was Mitsuyuki Kido still a legislator and do you have any relationship?

GA: He was a senator. He was senate. We didn't have too much relationship with the senate during that period. Campaign, maybe, but that was about it.

TC: What year did you run for senate?

GA: Nineteen fifty-eight.

TC: It was very soon there.

GA: Yeah, '54, '56, I ran for the territorial house; '58, I ran for the territorial senate. Then Hawai'i became a state in '59 so we had to run all over again.

TC: So two terms in the house and then senate. What was your situation in the senate? Suddenly you had new relationships. Who stood out, positive or negative?

GA: That very short session between '58 election and '59, Hawai'i becoming a state, we had one legislation session. Herbert Lee wanted to be president. Nelson Doi wanted to become president. But I supported Herbert because I felt that Herbert was there longer and in terms of seniority he deserved it. I felt that Herbert was a very bright, able person, understood the legislative process very well, understood what the '54 session election was all about. So I supported Herbert Lee during that election. Then Kazuhisa Abe was with Nelson Doi from the Big Island. But Kazuhisa and Nelson were not that close friends, personally. I had known that also. I was very close to Stanley Hara, and Stanley Hara and Kazuhisa were very close. So it was very natural for me to be get close to Kazuhisa Abe. Then the '58 session was over and '59 election came up and we lost control. Democrats lost control; Republicans came by 14 to 11 vote.

MK: I was wondering, how come—you know, you ran in '54 and you ran again in '56. What made you stay in politics? Why did you continue?

GA: Because I began to feel that the work of the politician, legislators, are very important to Hawai'i and the well-being of people.

MK: So you wanted to continue. In '58, there was reapportionment. The districts were changed a little bit, the numbers increased.

GA: Not in '58.

MK: Not in '58? But in '58 you decided to run for senate.

GA: Yes.

MK: How come you decided to move to the senate side?

GA: I think it was a natural progression from where I was in the house and feeling that maybe I could do more in the senate because we had fewer people, and your vote counted more than the house.

MK: Were there others like you that made the jump from the house to the senate, that went along?

GA: Yeah. The campaign was the same way. Wait now, you're talking reapportionment.

MK: I thought it was in '58 before the last territorial legislature.

GA: I think don't remember running on the other side of O'ahu. (Pause) The senate was—the house they had two districts. Senate, only one district on O'ahu. I don't remember running on the fourth district side. So maybe you're right; maybe we had reapportionment.

MK: I thought that there was reapportionment and the numbers increased, more opportunities. So I thought maybe that's why you decided to try for the senate.

GA: That's right. We had an increase. Before that we had only fifteen senators. We had an increase, yeah. That's when I think Sakae Takahashi, Patsy Mink, myself.

MK: I think Dan Inouye maybe. Did he go to the senate?

GA: No.

MK: No, not him.

GA: Yeah, during that session Dan Inouye went to the senate. Last territorial senate, Dan Inouye also ran for the senate and he got elected too.

MK: Was the reapportionment advantageous for you folks maybe?

GA: That's right. Because before that we had only six senators, six out of fifteen were from O'ahu. Four-year term, and three ran one year and three the next election. But that election when I ran for territorial senate, Sakae Takahashi and Patsy Mink and I got elected. It must have been reapportionment. On the other side: Dan Inouye—Anna Kahanumoku was already gone.

TC: Was it Porteus?

GA: Porteus, uh-huh. Ward Russell.

MK: Ward Russell, yeah.

TC: Was that the year Webley Edwards got elected?

GA: I don't remember Webley Edwards.

MK: At that time, when they had reapportionment, was it an individual decision to go for the senate or was there some strategists, Democratic party strategists?

GA: No. I think once you got involved, ran for office, I think running for the house and then running for the senate is the next progression, natural progression.

- TC: In terms of relationships, it seems like we're sort of talking about the 1958 election and that short session and the 1959 in one breath here. Was your relationship with Burns evolving in any way? Was he looming bigger? He had finally got to be delegate.
- GA: Yeah. Before the '56 election, Bert Kobayashi, Russell Kono and I and Alfred Laureta decided that we should try to bring the party together. Not have Burns Democrat and Tom Gill Democrats. In terms of the election for Burns we felt that we should bring it together. So we went to see Tom Gill and Tom Gill was very hard. He said, "No." He's not going to go along. He can't like Jack Burns. So at that point, we decided that Burns and Gill faction cannot come together. We thought it was possible. Bert Kobayashi thought it was possible. He wanted to do that. But at that point we decided no it will not happen as the future. So we decided at that point to become very strong, hard supporters of Jack Burns. In that '56 election, I supported Jack Burns. I campaigned hard for him. But I was never part of the Burns faction.
- TC: What do you think—this is an interesting subtle distinction. But you were not part of the Burns faction, as you describe, and yet you strongly campaigned for him. What do you think it meant to be independent, and yet, as opposed to what it meant, to be quote "part of the Burns faction"? What is that distinction?
- GA: It didn't make any difference to me. I was what I was. I conducted myself in a certain kind of way. I legislated in a certain kind of way. So all of that was not going to change, except that there was one person here that I felt would be very good for Hawai'i and I wanted to see him become delegate. That's how I campaigned for him.
- MK: How did others view you? Did they see you as being more a Burns guy or independent?
- GA: I think the Gill faction viewed me as now being Burns side, aligned there, even though I was not aligned. See that's one thing about the Gill faction, they were very quick to categorize people and align people and divide people.
- MK: How about the Burns—the real strong supporters of Jack Burns, like Dan Aoki, Mike Tokunaga. How did they view you?
- GA: I was not accepted 100 percent by them. They were kind of suspicious of me. I think that suspicion continued until the very end. By "very end" I mean until even after I got elected governor. For example, I asked Dan Akaka in 1976 to run for Congress. Burns had already gone but their faction wanted Cec Heftel. They talked to Cec Heftel and Akaka won. One time I was told someone told—I don't want to mention the name—"Why the heck didn't Ariyoshi come and talk to us and tell us what he wanted to have done?"

My response was, "Why didn't they come and tell what they were planning to do?" I don't know who to go to talk to. I had my own ideas about what had to be done. My own idea was I asked Dan Akaka to run in the '74 election because I wanted him to be my lieutenant governor. That didn't work out. So I ended up with another person as lieutenant governor. So in '76 it was a very natural thing for me to do. I brought Dan Akaka to work in my office. So it was very natural for me to look at Dan. I wanted him to move into Congress. That's what I did and I got criticized for not having talked about that

and may have made the decision by myself. But Jack Burns was already gone. He had nothing to do with that kind of criticism.

MK: Back in the fifties then, in terms of your relationship with Jack Burns, was it more one-on-one, not with people in between?

GA: Right. I think what really happened was, in 1956 I felt that's the person I wanted. But in the 1958 election—during that period between 1956 and 1958, Hawai'i was always known as the forty-ninth state. We did not become the forty-ninth state because Alaska was put ahead of Hawai'i. Jack Burns was responsible for that. The house, Democrat house, looked at us Democrats okay. But the senate looked at another senator coming in and they did not want to see a Republican senator come in. Alaska was Democrat and Hawai'i was not, so they wanted Hawai'i to come in after Alaska. So they felt, bring Alaska in and we would get a Democratic senator from Alaska and then Hawai'i could come in. It took a lot of courage for Jack Burns to come back to Hawai'i and to tell the people of Hawai'i, "We are not the forty-ninth state. We're going to become the fiftieth state. Because of what I perceived as necessary to make Hawai'i become a state, I gave way to Alaska. Let them go first." It's a very courageous thing for a delegate to do. I told Jack Burns that.

I said, "You did the right thing. It's a very courageous thing. I feel very strongly, because you had the courage, Hawai'i has now become a state. You are more concerned about Hawai'i and its people rather than what the politics was to you. You were willing to take that political risk and I really strongly support and endorse you." I went out and I campaigned hard for him during the '58 election. I gave many speeches, talking about his courage letting Alaska go before Hawai'i.

MK: At that time, were there others who also backed up Burns and went out and gave speeches like you?

GA: The Gill faction didn't move at all. So they continued to be what they were. I went out and I spoke and I got votes for Jack Burns for the courage that he exhibited.

WN: Were your talks limited to Hawai'i? Did you go to other places?

GA: No. I never campaigned outside of Hawai'i.

WN: I'm wondering, did the general population of Hawai'i, were they aware of the weaknesses of Hawai'i as a state argument? For example, the Communist infiltration and number two, the heavy Asian population. Were you aware of that at all or did you try to talk about these kinds of issues?

GA: No. I was not aware. There might have been that kind of concern at one time, but at the time I got involved, and at the time Jack Burns was running for office and I campaigned in the '58 election, I was not aware of anything that would hold statehood back from us. I think the one that I knew of was that Hawai'i was Republican and therefore they didn't want a Republican senator. The house had passed the statehood bill many times but it was the senate that blocked it always. It was very, very crucial for Jack Burns to get Lyndon

Johnson to agree, understand, that the senate vote was very important and he convinced Lyndon Johnson.

MK: Also by that time, we have so many lawmakers of Japanese background, lot of Japanese names if you go down the rolls.

GA: You mean in Hawai'i?

MK: In Hawai'i.

GA: Yes.

MK: Was there any concern on your part about—we had so many Japanese now in office?

GA: Not that kind of concern but I think a desire to want to see other people get more opportunities too. We talked about, after the '54 election, I talked about now that we have the power, to go about doing it, making it possible for people to get opportunities on a fair and equal basis. I thought about that and I thought one option was, take away the current opportunities and transfer it to our friends. But if you did that, we are going to be doing the same things that the Big Five people are doing. So we decided right away. I didn't want to do that. How are we going to do this? I concluded that the best way to do this was to create more opportunities in Hawai'i so more people can participate, on a fairer basis participate in more opportunities. That's what I felt very strongly about. Everything that I did was I wanted to include more people. It was not for us only but it was for other persons in this community. So I wanted to see other people involved. For me, it was not the balance kind of thing.

I don't even know if I should talk about this but Jack Burns told me, "You know what a banana is?"

I said, "Yeah I know. Fruit."

"What color?"

"Yellow."

"What about inside?" Inside, to me it was cream. "White," he told me.

I told him, "Yeah, I guess more white."

"So it's yellow outside, white inside." He told me, "I don't want you to become a banana. I don't want to see you, because of circumstances, you feel you've got to become white so that you can get an advantage." So he indicated to me that he knew people who were like that, who had become like a banana.

TC: The statehood election, the '59, there was a famous story in Fuch's particularly, of Burns pushing hard for a racial balance on who would run for the new Senate seats for Congress. So there was this crunch on Dan Inouye to run for the House rather than the Senate. Oren Long and I think Judge [William] Heen ran for U.S. Senate.

GA: Frank Fasi ran.

TC: Frank Fasi jumped in out of the bleachers type thing. Were you aware that that kind of tension was going on and did you have any feelings about it?

GA: No. I was not aware of the tension but I knew there was talk about some balance, trying to include other people other than . . .

TC: A balance.

GA: Right. I was aware of that kind of conversation. Now, Jack Burns wanted Mitsuyuki Kido to be his lieutenant governor. He didn't make it. But I know, in 1970, when he came to see me to run for lieutenant governor, he had the same kind of concern. He wanted Mitsuyuki Kido to be running for lieutenant governor, hopefully that maybe he could become governor at some point. If he were to do that, he would break the imbalance; he would break the existence of the Mainland, the white, dominating all the top, and local, not having this kind of chance. That's why he told me in (1970, for lieutenant governor, and in 1974 for governor), I told him, "Gee, my law practice is my first love. I have a hard time with that."

He told me, "Please listen to me very carefully because what I am going to say to you is very important. No person, other than a white person, has ever been elected governor. No person, other than a white person born outside of Hawai'i, has ever been elected governor of Hawai'i. That's what they have to break. That's what I want you to break and maybe, if you did that, you're successful, we can have other people—Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, other people—can become leaders." That's what he told me. That's why I wanted to consider running for office in '74.

TC: This statement that he made . . .

GA: And he told me Mitsuyuki Kido. That's what he felt in 1974.

TC: So Kido, in his mind, Kido was the original step but that didn't work out.

GA: No—was it Kido? Or was it—I know Spark Matsunaga also.

TC: It was Kido.

GA: Was Kido. Then Spark the following year.

TC: Spark the following year ran for Congress even though Jack didn't want him to, I think.

GA: I have a feeling that Spark also ran for lieutenant governor.

TC: Maybe he did and but he lost to Kido or something like that.

GA: Oh, I see.

TC: Yeah, I'll have to look at that.

GA: Yeah, that's right. He lost one election.

WN: So Kido was Burns's first running mate when he lost to Quinn. Is that it? Fifty-nine.

TC: Yeah.

WN: Sixty—when did Burns first run against Quinn?

GA: Was Matsunaga running against Kido in the primary in that same election?

TC: I think so.

GA: Because I remember both running for lieutenant governor at some point.

WN: I see. So this is '59 because this is the first post-statehood election and Burns ran against Quinn, right? So Burns's running mate was Mits Kido.

TC: That's right.

WN: So you're saying that Kido defeated Spark Matsunaga in the primary.

TC: I think so, possibly.

WN: I see, okay.

TC: The story that you tell of him talking about Mits Kido in that way, very, very interesting. Mits Kido went way back with Burns into the wartime.

MK: I think we're going to have to end here and then pick it up. It's a good place to end.

TC: Okay.

WN: How much more time on this tape?

TC: Do you want to keep going for a little while, Governor?

GA: It's okay. Yeah.

WN: We're going to have to go. (Chuckles) I have a student to meet with. It's the only time.

MK: Governor, thank you for today.

(Interviewers discuss scheduling. WN and MK leave.)

GA: You got anything else for me?

TC: What if we go on for a little while, if you have some more time?

GA: Oh, I forgot my watch.

TC: It's 11:20.

GA: Okay, fifteen minutes.

TC: Okay, fifteen minutes. I'll watch the clock. The 1959 campaign—in 1958 you had sort of stuck your neck out for Burns because you were out asking people to vote for him even though he had done this controversial move. Then in 1959, he had statehood. Were you also out campaigning for him in '59?

GA: Mm-hmm.

TC: How did that go?

GA: He lost the election, you know. That campaign, the people who campaigned for him didn't campaign very hard.

TC: Do you think they thought it was a shoe-in?

GA: I think so. Because who was Bill Quinn? Nobody knew him. He had run for the senate one time, but had not made it.

TC: How did you feel when you saw the election results?

GA: I was very disappointed, disappointed also because we lost the senate. I was going to be in the minority, the only time I served in the minority.

TC: What do you think—do you remember what you thought was happening? Did you think the Republicans were making a comeback, a big comeback?

GA: No. Because I've always felt that the strength of the party comes from being close to the people. The house of representatives is that group that's closer to the people, smaller district and you know they're out there with the people and talking to them. That's why I don't understand today, Tom, why they spend so much money, especially the house members. District was so small, they got to raise so much money. If I were running in the house, I'd cover every house in the district and talk to them about what I feel very strongly about. What do you feel about what is happening?

Today, the campaign funding makes it so that everybody is far from the people now. The only contact they have really with the people is, they issue a paid newsletter. Spend money to print. All it talks about is what they did, what's happening during the session. No more talk about: what issues were there, why certain issues are important, why the legislative process is important, what we can do to try to make things better. To me, the current legislators, they're missing the boat.

TC: From the 1959 organization on, what was it like to be in the minority? You had three years in the minority, I think.

GA: You know, I was treated very nicely. Even [W.H.] "Doc" Hill [prominent Big Island businessman and longtime legislator], during the end of the legislative session, Doc Hill came to me and he gave me three 1880 dollars, uncirculated ones. He said, "These are very valuable. I want you to give it to your children." I had very close relationship with people. They accepted me as a person who had strong feelings, wanted to do what I felt I

wanted to do but who they could talk to. I think the same way that I was accepted in the 1967 session—after the '66 reorganization, when I could have been a thorn in their side and I wasn't. So in 1968, after that '68 election, Dave McClung came to me. He was going to become speaker. He came to me and told me, "We are very concerned you were going to be a thorn in our side but you were not. You tried to be helpful. I offer you now, any position that you want. You name it. What do you want? Ways and means? Majority floor leader?"

My response was, "It's not for me to choose. It's for you to tell me where I can serve."

TC: In that 1962 campaign—so that is Burns's make or break and you're trying to get the senate back. What do you remember about that campaign?

GA: I think Bob Oshiro got more involved in that campaign. I think it was more organized, more grass roots, and more in line with Burns's thinking. The name of this game was to add people not to subtract. It's very opposite to what they are doing now in the senate. So during Burns time, my time, I welcomed—Ann Kobayashi was a Republican. She became a Democrat, very good Democrat she became. I'm trying to think of who else.

TC: Bob Oshiro came on the scene. He had probably gotten after you first in 1959. At what point did you start to have some acquaintance with Bob?

GA: Bob Oshiro came to me in, I think, maybe around 1960. He had a big chart. He had all the people by age. He told me, "Look at this chart. Everybody who is young in '54 are now in this other older bracket here. We don't have people replacing them." That's what Bob Oshiro became very concerned about, everybody was getting old and we're not getting young people in.

That's why when I became lieutenant governor, 1970 election, that Democratic party election, I talked a great deal about new people, young people, bringing them in. But you can't bring them in and expect them to be like robots, us telling them, "Come join." But us telling them exactly how they become, what they become after they join.

TC: What was your relationship with Bob in, say, 1960? Was he as—what kind of guy was he then?

GA: I didn't know Bob Oshiro that well at that point. It was only when he started to talk to me about the party and the age and how we're not acknowledging what's going to happen to the party five years from now? Everybody up there, nobody does anything about here. I learned that Bob was not just a legislator, but he was very concerned about Hawai'i's future and the political future. His involvement in the governor's campaign therefore, he wanted to add more people, bring in more new people. Burns's book, he gave to everybody. "You take this book. You keep on adding new names here, people who've not been involved." That is how we got the book of people, new people coming in.

The 1978 election, when I was behind in the polls, when they called Bob. [Dan] Tuttle [pollster], we talked about that and whether it was too late and what we can do. Bob Oshiro's feeling was, two things happened in the campaign. You got all the people who showed up at that big rally at the stadium. "Don't tell me that that didn't mean something

politically. They're our people. We got to get to them. That book that we have, we have lists of people who"—we had a huge list. Bob Oshiro told me, later on, he said, "That's what you got to do. Go back to our strength. Telephone campaign, people calling their relatives and their friends and talking about this race, how close, what is happening. How we cannot lose this election, how we need their support. For them to pick up a telephone and call their friends, and their friends call their friends too." Bob Oshiro told me that during that one-week period, one hundred thousand people were reached by telephone. That was the election.

TC: That's really amazing. In this . . .

GA: The other thing about Bob Oshiro, in the 1982 campaign, when Jean King jumped in the race, when Anderson ran in that race as a Republican—no, as an independent—I was very concerned that they were going to take their people and vote in the Democratic primary and vote with Jean King to defeat me so they could have an easier opponent in the general. Bob and I talked about that. Bob told me, "I'm not concerned. We have our base and nobody is going to take that base away from us. That base is bigger than anything they can put together." So Bob was very confident in the '78 election and '82 election.

TC: Let's go back to the '60, '62 period. The talk that Burns had about Mitsuyuki Kido, and then yourself, in that talk, he drew a great distinction between legislative service, which many of you had experienced, and the executive power. Could you talk about that a little more?

GA: I think that Jack Burns felt that in terms of what happens, the legislature controls policy by the laws that they pass, but execution, the executive branch becomes very important. That's where the people are. It's how you treat people that makes people respond or react against or for you. That was Jack Burns' position. He would tell me for example, "You paint the floor, don't paint it up in the corner." He said, "Never do that to people. Don't let people paint themselves in a corner, where they're stuck and they can't be for you." There's always the opportunity for somebody who may be against you coming to join you. The name of this game is to increase and not decrease people. That was Jack Burns's philosophy.

Do you remember Jack Burns gave a talk on the slight feeling of inferiority that was felt by our people and we must overcome this?

TC: I do.

GA: Everybody from outside being elected, only white people being elected. It adds to the feeling of inferiority. Once you can break that, you'll break it open. You get over this feeling of inferiority. So that talk of his was tied in with his wanting us to break the barrier that existed.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-19-10-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

July 11, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

MK: . . . Japanese American men close to you. How common was this kind of practice? Once you get married, you go bring everybody together in one household.

GA: I think it depends on the people in the generation. I think a more educated one looked maybe at establishing their own household right away. But it's a more traditional Japanese. The ones that I know that grew up in the plantation that lived in Kalihi, Pālama, and that area, I think they all got married and the wives came to live with the family. So living together with family I think was more traditional, practiced more by a larger—number-wise—by people than those who felt that they had to establish their own household right away.

MK: In the beginning, where did you folks live?

GA: At the time we got married, we lived at Kawānanakoa Place, 29 Kawānanakoa. That's the home that we lived in for a long time. All my children were born in that house. Today, my son [Donn Ariyoshi] lives in that house with his wife and his family. It was a big house, and we had a big lot and yard. It was good for the children growing up, too. It was kind of more or less Oriental neighborhood, and I think that 80 percent of the people living in that neighborhood were Japanese.

All the kids—because our yard was big too, we had a big yard—the kids would come over to the house and play in our yard. Play football. They even got me involved sometimes. They would play football and they would come tackle me hard, but they expected somebody to grab my legs and then I'd fall and then everybody piled on me.

(Laughter)

But it was a very fun, good experience. Enjoyable, pleasant experience growing up with my children at that house.

Then I remember the thing I still do. This morning, when Ryo-*kun*, Ryoichi [GA's grandson], goes to school in the morning, he goes with his mother, but I always get up in time and I go out the house with him and I watch him get into the car and I wave good-bye to him. I remember my father, when we were living at Kawānanakoa Place. My

school was the end of the road there, and my father always walked all my children when they were at Maemae School to school. Then saw them go into the schoolyard. He waved until he saw them go in there, and then he came back. So that's something that I remember my father doing.

My father also, his name was Ryoza too. My oldest son is Ryoza. When my son was born we named him Todd Ryoza Ariyoshi. But he became very close to my father—to his grandpa. So when he grew up, he changed his name from Todd Ryoza Ariyoshi to just Ryoza Ariyoshi. There's a very funny story about my father and his name too. My father once he retired and was working out in the yard, and Ryoza would go there and work with him and help him, his grandpa would tell him, "Ryoza can you bring. . . ." certain item, for him. He would go running and bring it to him.

One day he said, "Grandpa, why did you take my name?"

(Laughter)

So grandpa told me that story later on and he laughed. He said he was told, "Why did I take his name?" (MK and GA laugh.)

TC: What was the history of that house? It's a huge house. Had you bought that, or how did that work?

GA: Yeah, we bought that house. It was built by someone. It's old and very solid, stone walls. Very thick stone walls. So the house is very solid. It was built some time ago before that by someone and we bought that house from them.

TC: What year did you buy it?

GA: I think right after I got elected. Because I campaigned 1954 from Kalihi and I got married in '55, so just in between there we had bought the house. We had been looking for the house anyway, but we found that house and we bought it at that time.

So all my children were born in that house. My daughter, Lynn, would have been before the 1957 session. But, my wife had to go into the hospital three times before she came up. Because of that she was born about a week after the legislative session started, otherwise the normal time she would have been born three or four weeks before the legislative session.

My son Ryoza was born on May 4, but he was born during the legislative session, because legislative session then last day was May 2. Back in those days in 1959, we had the practice of stopping the clock. By stopping the clock, it meant that no matter what day it was, we stopped the clock on May 2, so certain adjournment was dated May 2. I think that second session went for twenty-five days about. So twenty-five days after that it was May 2. We have a resolution for Lynn because she was born during the session, and we have the resolution for Ryoza. He was born May 4, but because the May 2 session went beyond, we have a resolution dated May 2 congratulating us on the birth of our son, but there's nothing mentioned there about the date of his birth. (WN laughs.)

Donn was born March 16, right in the middle. We kid Donn, “Oh, Donn, you didn’t want to take a chance coming before or after, so you got born right in the middle.” (MK and WN laugh.)

TC: The house fascinates me, because it’s really a lovely house. It’s in a place where you really feel like you’re in Hawai‘i. It’s got that great Nu‘uanu Valley feel. When you took the leap of signing this mortgage, you were a young lawyer and with a lot of responsibilities. Was that a leap of faith that you were going to be able to swing this house project?

GA: I was very fortunate. I started in my law practice with Fred Patterson, and after he died I joined Bert Kobayashi. Bert Kobayashi, but also Russell Kono, Alfred Laureta and myself. For a young lawyer, I had begun to do well. I started to get some very good clients. They were not the Big Five *kine* clients, but they were people doing business who were providing very steady employment. So I was very confident of my ability in my law practice. I felt good about what I was doing.

MK: In those days, I know that Mrs. Ariyoshi had been trained as a teacher.

GA: Yes.

MK: What were your expectations, yours and Mrs. Ariyoshi’s expectations, in terms of her work or her contribution to family life?

GA: She only practiced teaching for one year. She never taught after that, but she did practice teaching at Radford [High School] right after we got married in ’55—a year. She was a math and she was a speech teacher.

MK: But, there were no plans for her to continue teaching even after the birth of the children?

GA: No. She never did go to teaching. I didn’t stop her either, but I think it was a decision that was made—take care of the family, raise the family. I was going to get busy politically. She needed to be sure the children were taken care of.

MK: You mentioned you were with Bert Kobayashi, Russell Kono, and Alfred Laureta. You said you had some pretty good clients—not Big Five, but what kind of law practice was it? What did you concentrate on?

GA: My first two years I did a lot of—because I was with Fred Patterson—a lot of criminal practice. But I also did a lot of insurance work, because Patterson was one of the co-founders of Pacific Insurance Company. So I did a lot of subrogations, small cases going to court, and accident cases. After I left that, I continued some of that practice—took some of it with me. But I also began to look at small businesses, contractors, people getting started, real estate activities. People who had other small businesses that needed help.

MK: How long did you have this association with Bert Kobayashi and Russell Kono?

GA: Until (pause) 1963, when Jack Burns became governor. He picked up Bert Kobayashi. His first selection for his staff was Bert Kobayashi. Bert left very suddenly, very fast. He

told us sorry, but he thinks this is very important to the state and to Jack Burns and he's got to go.

So after he left we started to—we continued a little while later. We moved. We had an office on Bethel Street, and we moved to the First Hawaiian Center. No. Oh, right here. This building was not built, but it was the Honolulu Savings building that was along Merchant and Alakea [Streets]. This building was at that time—First Hawaiian building—was only nineteen-story structure. So we had an opportunity. I moved here. Then I had gotten approached by First Hawaiian Bank to be a director. So it was kind of natural for me to want to move into this building. We had a small—Russell Kono and at that time Norman Suzuki joined us. We moved here. When we moved here, we didn't have a partnership, and Russell continued to do his own stuff. I did my own, but I got Norman Suzuki to do some of my work. I started to get busy, so I got Bert Kobayashi—Bert's son—he came to join me. I'm thinking about the other young lawyer. (Pause) It'll come. They came and they worked with me. Then, shortly after that, Jack Burns in 1969 asked me to come in and talk to me about running for lieutenant governor.

WN: So it was an unincorporated law firm?

GA: Right.

WN: So there was no name for it and you folks weren't considered partners, it was all each of you doing your own individual kind of work?

GA: Yes. But for Bert and Norman, and what's the other fellow's name? Kahu [Kanu Hawai'i]? That firm that young group of people who believe they're going to do their part to make Hawai'i become more . . .

TC: Oh, [James] Koshiba.

GA: Koshiba. His father, James E. T. Koshiba, came and this law firm before it split, Kobayashi Watanabe. They were kind of the start of the firm, the group that I put together initially. One of the concerns that I had about running for lieutenant governor was I told Jack Burns, "I just put a young group of lawyers together. I have some responsibility to them. It's hard for me to leave."

So they came to me and they told me, "Go. We can manage. We can handle it."

TC: You were, in essence, the founder of this law firm. But then you went off to the capitol every day. (TC and WN laugh.) They kept on going.

GA: We didn't have any law firm formed as such, but it was the beginning of the firm—people coming together.

MK: I see. No wonder.

TC: But he was the inspiration for the whole thing. You were the person who attracted all the different people. Then they had to progress on their own.

MK: No wonder, when I would look at this directory of *Who's Who in Government* and I look under your name and sometimes it would just say, "George Ariyoshi, owner, law firm." So I thought, gee, what had happened? So now you've explained that. Also, we have this question. So Jean was trained to teach math and speech, so as you become more and more active in your legal practice and in politics, what role did she play? Did she kind of coach you in speeches or anything like that?

GA: No. She took care of the kids for one thing, and did a good job of doing that. She was very supportive in the campaign. She went out campaigning with me. In fact—this goes later on. My second reelection campaign—my first reelection campaign in 1978 she went to the neighbor islands to have coffee hours with ladies. She did that for about a month. Every day, she would have two or three coffee hours. All she does, nothing politics, no speaking or anything like that. She just got together with four or five ladies she's invited to the home—and she met with them. They just talked what women talk about and became very close to four or five ladies. Maybe that afternoon or that evening do the same kind of things. So maybe every day she was having three or four coffee hours like that. Each one, she became very close. When I went to Big Island, people would come up to me and tell me, "Where's Jean?"

(Laughter)

They weren't interested in meeting me, they were more interested in meeting Jeanie.

(Laughter)

But Jeanie had a very good knack of meeting people, talking to people, making them feel very comfortable. In fact, she was out once in Kona with a group of ladies, and when they went to a Kona shop, one of the ladies in the shop said, "You know what? Did anybody tell you that you really look like Mrs. Ariyoshi?"

(Laughter)

But because she was with a group of people, very relaxed, not dressed up or anything like that, she didn't think that was Jeanie.

TC: That's funny.

MK: That's a good story about her being out in the community.

GA: Yeah. She was very good. In many ways I am a very shy person. I can't go out like other politicians—they go to dinner and they stand up to go around shaking hands. I can't do that. I'm just not made to circulate like that. Or, if I go to a function—large function—I don't go around myself. I kind of stand and people come and talk to me. I stand in one area. So, my campaign would notice that. They said, "Hey, you've got to move around." So they assigned somebody to take me around, otherwise I would just stay in one corner. (MK and WN laugh.)

But Jeanie was very good. She was, "Hi," very, very friendly. Remember names. Remember places that they met.

MK: My goodness. You know, there's also this story in Mrs. Ariyoshi's book where on your honeymoon, a reporter even found you folks on the beach.

GA: Yes.

MK: So, how did you folks make an adjustment to this kind of public life?

GA: I think we accepted that things like that would happen. That we would be asked to respond. People would stop us. Both she and I accepted that, so it was very easy for us to adjust.

By the way, on that honeymoon—you reminded me. Grace Buscher [Guslander]—we went to Coco Palms. Grace Buscher was there. Toshi Serizawa was the representative from Kaua'i at that time, so we met with Toshi and met Grace Buscher at Coco Palms. Every day when we went out for activities, we came back and we found our beds separated. (MK laughs.) So Jean and I would put the beds together again. Next day we go out and come back, beds separated again. It happened about two days. One day, Toshi called Grace Buscher and said, "Grace, you realize that Ariyoshis are married? This is their honeymoon. You folks are separating the beds every day."

Grace said, "Oh, we didn't know this was happening." She had to talk to the housemaid.

(Laughter)

She talked to the housemaid, so the next day when we came back, our beds were kept together.

(Laughter)

MK: Oh, what a story. (Laughs) But Toshi Serizawa would come and talk story with you?

GA: Yes. In fact, it was very quiet beach on Kaua'i and I didn't see anybody—only Jean and I out on the beach. Then off in the distance I can see somebody walking towards us. I didn't know who that person was until they got closer, and that reporter was a planning director deputy there.

TC: Greaney? Ed Greaney?

GA: Yeah. Ed Greaney.

TC: Oh, you're kidding. (Laughs)

GA: He was a reporter at that time and he came up to me and he told me. . . . What was happening was they were having a great deal of controversy on Kaua'i County between the mayor and the council members. I don't know whether they were called council members at that time, or supervisors, but they were having some problems and they wanted me to—now that I'm on Kaua'i, do I have any comments. My response was, "Hey, I just got elected. I'm trying to figure out what my role is and how I'm going to handle my work." So I can't get involved—I don't want to get involved in what's happening in Kaua'i County, so I just left it at that. That taught me a lesson also, that I

should always be prepared to respond to a question that comes to me. Either I respond or I find a way not to respond. That particular time, I found a way to say I just got elected and I'm trying to concentrate on what I need to do and I can't get involved in what's happening outside of the realm of my activities.

Another way I responded was—Frank Fasi, he wanted my job so badly that he would be so critical of me. Before and right after the [gubernatorial] election, all year round he would go making comments about me and about things that I was doing. Lots of it were things that were fabricated, things that were not true. My first impulse was to respond to him, but I learned from Jack Burns, who told me that somebody says something about you, if you respond you get that person to repeat it again. But if you don't respond and don't say anything, it just dies there. Especially if whatever they say is not of substance. The people asking you will understand that it's what Frank Fasi said, but the subject matter would not be that important. So that's the other response, I would say consider the source.

TC: In the political vein, I'm just trying to think where we have been and where we pick up, but I think we pretty well covered the mid [19]50s and later [19]50s. We talked about the '54 session, and Governor King.

GA: Huge numbers of vetoes.

TC: We had one question—I think we pretty much covered your going from [state] house to senate, but let's go back to that just very briefly. Was that decision part of some orchestrated move or was it just the sort of opportunity resulting from this expansion?

GA: Yes. That's what it was. I was in the house; I was comfortable there. I think it's a natural progression for every politician, when you go to the house, when there's an opportunity, they will move up to the senate. To begin with, the house is still a two-year term. You get elected senate and you continue four years. I think that part alone made it desirable if I'm going to continue in the legislature. Plus, I think that the numbers are smaller, so we would have greater influence over the subject matters that come up in the legislature. And, we're representing a larger constituency.

TC: In '59 we did talk—well, in '58, so that's the same year—we talked about your support for then-delegate Burns's Alaska strategy and your admiration for the integrity that went into that. But then along came statehood, and we didn't really talk about just your personal experience of that. Do you remember where you were even when you heard that statehood announcement?

GA: I was at the territorial senate. I was a senator at that time. I had a very good friend from the Mainland, San Francisco, Richard Goldman. Richard Goldman was a great insurance executive in the Bay Area. One of the most generous people giving things that needed to be done in the Bay Area. He happened to be visiting. He just happened to be at the senate office there in 'Iolani Palace when the announcement came through. So, it was nice to be with a person outside of Hawai'i who became a very close friend of mine.

It was a great, joyous moment, because we knew—the [U.S.] House [of Representatives] had always been supportive and had tried several times to pass the thing, and had passed

it. It was always the [U.S.] Senate that couldn't get it through. I talked to Jack Burns some time after that about how that Senate bill got through, and one was his willingness to let Alaska go first. So now, instead of competing with Alaska, he had Alaska's support also for statehood. On top of that, the president established a goal beyond forty-eight states at that particular time. A very important factor was the Senate was controlled by Democrats, and they wanted to be sure they were not going to lose control, or minimize the control, they had over the Senate by having a Republican coming in representing Hawai'i. That's why Alaska first—Alaska was sending a Democratic senator, Hawai'i would then send a Republican senator, but offset. That was a very important part. Even though Jack Burns knew that the chances were we were going to send a Democrat senator, and that's what happened. Republican senator from Alaska, Democrat senator from Hawai'i. Even though at that time the expectation was reverse.

TC: In that conversation or those conversations that you had with Governor Burns, did he refer much or with much intensity to the importance of his relationship with Speaker Rayburn or then Majority Leader Johnson?

GA: LBJ [Lyndon B. Johnson]. Yeah.

TC: What did he say?

GA: He felt that LBJ was a very close, personal friend. He got very close to him. He trusted LBJ, and he felt that LBJ would be good to him too. In fact, it was that friendship that resulted in the creation of the East-West Center.

TC: It was a very close. . . .

GA: That's why I think what is important to me is what a person does or believes in, but also the ability to create friendship.

TC: Relationship.

GA: Very important. Dan Akaka has that ability to create friendship. Dan Inouye is very strong on issues. He can talk, and because of his position he brings people together. But Dan Akaka, because of the person he is and the aloha he exhibits—when I used to go to Washington, when he was in the House, the House members would tell me, “Oh, Dan Akaka's friend? Dan Akaka, we would do anything to help him.” That's what Jack Burns did with LBJ.

TC: Let me ask a couple of more LBJ questions, because I think that my feeling about LBJ is that he was very important to the history of Hawai'i, but this idea hasn't really been examined much. It hasn't been developed. You say that Governor Burns talked about the importance on the statehood bill and the East-West Center. By extension that Hawai'i itself was very important to Johnson, that he was touched by what he saw here or he was affected by what he saw here.

GA: Jack Burns was the one who got him to come to Hawai'i and visit Hawai'i. He was very touched with what was happening in Hawai'i. He kind of felt it was like the American dream. Everybody working and living together. You know, he was from Texas, but he

was a person who really took the strong position—that civil rights measure. It was hard for a person like him, but I think it's an indication of the kind of person he was. The political strength that he carried, and his willingness to take some of that political risk to do what he felt was important and necessary.

TC: Hawai'i possibly was a significant source of his inspiration or belief that civil rights legislation would work out, that we were not meant to be segregated. Right?

GA: Mm-hmm. As I indicated in that friendship—because of LBJ's friendship with Jack Burns—when I became governor, Lady Bird, LBJ's wife, was very friendly to us. We became very close to her. Her daughter. . . .

MK: Was it Lynda?

WN: Lynda and Luci.

MK: Lynda and Luci?

GA: Married governor from [Virginia]. . .

TC: Lynda.

MK: Charles Robb.

WN: Robb, yeah.

GA: Yeah, Charles Robb. We became very close to her too. It's funny how this relationship can have a great impact on what other people that follow us can have. To me, when we got so close to Lady Bird—we didn't see her that often, but we'd see her at governor's meeting—she was always cordial. She spent time with us and spent time with Jeanie. I always felt that it was because Jack Burns had gotten very close to LBJ.

WN: Were you familiar with any kind of agreements or deals that were made between Burns and Johnson to push statehood through? For example, East-West Center—were you familiar with any kind of agreement?

GA: No, I don't think East-West Center was part of the statehood deal. But, I think the statehood deal came about after LBJ began to feel that Hawai'i is actually a wonderful place. It's a democracy, living. He is feeling that this was a natural place for a center like East-West Center to be created where people can come from both sides and feel very comfortable in this kind of setting. Not that comfortable to go to some other place. I think that's what helped him create that.

The statehood part was, I think it was a friendship that LBJ and Jack Burns developed. When you think about how Jack Burns let Alaska come first, he couldn't have done it unless he had some understanding, and unless he was willing. He knew what LBJ's concerns were, and about how some of the Southern Democrats were feeling about it. From Hawai'i, two Republican Senators. Very concerned. Even though Jack felt that would not be the situation, he couldn't guarantee it. So he felt that he had to—according to what they felt might be happening. Republican—Democrats from Alaska. So he had

that kind of conversation. It couldn't have happened naturally, unless Jack Burns had talked to LBJ and LBJ had expressed his concern to him about how some of the Southern Democrats felt. And, Jack Burns saying, "Okay, what I'll do is I'll help you. I'll let Alaska go first." That deal was very important.

TC: In this discussion, there is this complicated Republican-Democrat, and then it split. That's the top level of the partisan politics. But, underlying is LBJ as essentially the Southerner, the Texan. Texas is part of the South. Texas was part of the old confederacy. However, these Republicans or Democrats appeared in this Senate following these new states, there were potentially four new Senate votes for civil rights legislation, because they're more—not only Hawai'i but Alaska is a more progressive society. Did you ever see evidence that that was his underlying agenda?

GA: No. I don't think.

TC: You know what I'm driving at though?

GA: Yeah. I don't think that became a real issue. We think it really came down to that friendship between two individuals and the desire to accommodate each other, and understanding what had happened in the past about the Senate always voting it down. House passing, Senate voting it down. I think that friendship—Jack Burns appealing to LBJ. He feels very strongly about statehood, and you've got to make this possible. Can't keep on voting it down, and can we find a way to make this possible. And I think LBJ and Jack Burns coming up with a strategy. Okay, that's going to be both states. Have one state Republican, one Democrat. There had to be an understanding. Two individuals had to be working together and understand what was going to be happening, and agreeing to that decision.

WN: So the difference between say Jack Burns and Joe Farrington say, other than party differences—are you saying then that Jack Burns sort of had a way with LBJ in terms of personality and so forth?

GA: That's right. I think the courage on the part of Jack Burns to say, "I'm coming up for reelection in 1958, but I'm willing to go back to the people and tell the people I let Alaska go first." Hawai'i is going to come later after the election. There was no guarantee that was going to happen, but he felt that was the way to do it. He was willing to personally put himself on the line, that's what really made me feel very strongly about the character of Jack Burns.

MK: That he was willing to take that risk?

GA: That's right. He had no guarantee by doing this, Hawai'i was going to become a state. But he believed that that would happen, and that's the process that had to be followed. In the meantime, he had to face the people again. He had to go face the people and explain to them, "I let Alaska go first."

He was criticized by some people, saying, "Hey, Hawai'i was the forty-ninth state, not Alaska. We were always going to be the forty-ninth state, and we're going to become the fiftieth state?"

Jack Burns's position was, "Yes, but this is the way I saw the possibility that Hawai'i could become a state, and the only way we could become a state." He was willing to risk his political fortunes on this. That's what I really began to admire about Jack Burns. This man, he believes that's what it is. It's a great risk that he took, and he was willing to do that because he believed that was the right thing for Hawai'i.

MK: When you talk about this friendship between LBJ . . .

GA: And I campaigned hard. That's what I said during the campaign. Everywhere I went, I talked about Jack Burns, the political courage that he showed.

MK: This friendship between LBJ and Burns, you speak about that and how important that was. In your understanding, how did he cultivate this friendship? What was it based on?

GA: You know, it's not possible for everybody to come together. You can't take any two individuals and put them together and expect a friendship. There has to be something there. I think it's Jack Burns—the kind of person he was. I'm sure that he must have had conversation about his role in Hawai'i and how he worked to encourage so many young people to become part of the Democrats. He didn't mention me—I'm sure he didn't mention me—but I'm sure he mentioned people like Dan and many others that were involved that he brought into the party and to get the party started. I think those kind of things must have touched LBJ.

MK: I was wondering too that people talk about the 442[nd Regimental Combat Team] and The Lost Battalion. I'm wondering, was that part of it too?

GA: I'm sure. I'm sure that was part of it also. That's the people—The Lost Battalion people—that were rescued by the 442. That's the kind of people—the 442 people, the veterans who came back who he recruited to get involved in the Democratic party. Becoming very active in Democratic circles. Taking over the legislature the first time in Hawai'i's history in 1954 election. Those kind of things. I'm sure it must have touched LBJ into thinking, hey, this man is a man of substance.

To me, you can't be a phony and get very close to another person. At some point when you start getting close, you're going to find out whether that person is really a genuine person or that person is kind of a phony.

MK: So up to the point that Burns said, "Okay, if I don't get this Alaska-first thing in and get Hawai'i to become a state, I won't run again." Until that point . . .

GA: It's not that he won't run again, but it's just that he's not going to get reelected again.

MK: So until that point, did you hold him in that high regard that you came to hold him in following that? What was your association?

GA: I didn't know him that well. Some of the others were more involved with him. Dan, when he was still at university and recruiting people from the university to become active in law. In 1956, Bert Kobayashi, Russell Kono, Laureta, and I, we tried to get the Burns group and Tom Gill together. Burns group was willing to begin talking, but the Gill

faction was not. When we approached them, we talked to them—Tom Gill—about maybe, “Hey look, we’re Democrats. We have differences, but we’ve got to work together as best we can.” We tried, and we couldn’t work it out.

Bert is a very open person, and if you meet him you begin to understand his style. He’s very direct, and there is no misunderstanding of what he’s trying to do, what he’s trying to say. That’s the kind of person Bert was. When he came back out of that meeting, Bert’s response was, “It is not possible for us or anybody to get the group together. So we’re going to have the Burns faction and we’re going to have the Gill faction.”

MK: So, did Bert Kobayashi, Russell Kono, yourself, and Alfred Laureta go and independently as a group try to bring the two factions together? Or were you representing the Burns group?

GA: No. It was what we felt was important for somebody to do. We felt that maybe we were the people who were independent enough. We were not considered part of Burns faction, neither was any of us Burns faction. So we felt we would be the ideal people to get the two groups together.

MK: So Bert Kobayashi was not that close to Burns yet?

GA: No, no. But at that point we decided it was not possible. In fact, right after (pause) I’m not sure whether it was ’54. . . . No, not ’54, ’56—the county committee was a fight between Tom Gill and Tadao Beppu. Beppu lost. Tom Ebesu came to me and told me, “Hey look, our side lost.” But we can’t say we’re going to be angry that we lost and boycott everything that Tom Gill wanted to do, so he said, “Let’s go talk to Tom Gill.” So he and I went to meet with Tom Gill and we told Tom that the thing was all past now. You won. We feel that we got to work together to the extent we can—do things together and help. Tom Gill’s response was very cold. Didn’t say very much. He said, “I won, and I’m picking up the marbles.” There was nothing further we could say to him. So Tom [Ebesu] and I, we left that meeting feeling there wasn’t very much we could do.

MK: So even way back . . .

GA: We were not asking to get the Burns group, we were telling—Tom [Ebesu] and I as two individuals—we’re not part of the Burns faction. We want to participate and make it possible for Tom’s [Tom Gill’s] administration as county committee chairman to become better.

TC: So twice you reached out to Tom, didn’t you?

GA: That’s right.

TC: I never added that up.

GA: Three times. Three times. Right after the 1974 election primary, traditionally the losing candidate on the Democratic side come together and they help. I told Burns, “We should get Tom Gill to help us.”

He said, “You go talk to him.” (Chuckles)

So I went and I told him, “Tom, the election is all over. You lost but you can contribute; you have influence also. We’d like to work together. We’d like your help.”

He told me, “Absolutely not. I’m staying out of this race.”

I came back to Jack Burns and I told him that. He said, “See? I knew you would get that response, but I wanted you to go and firsthand get so you understand what that guy is all about.” If Jack Burns had lost, Jack Burns would have come out in favor of Tom Gill—supporting him in the general.

TC: Could I go back to, briefly, because I think this is so interesting and important. You developed a very nice relationship with Mrs. Johnson. She reflected her interest in Hawai‘i and her interest in you. Have you ever met LBJ?

GA: Mm-hmm [yes].

TC: You met him? What was the circumstances?

GA: Very casual meeting.

TC: Where was it and what. . . .

GA: I met him here, and I met him when I went to Washington. (Pause) I was in—I get my dates mixed up now. (Pause) I don’t remember. It was kind of casual meeting in Washington, but I did remember meeting him.

WN: This was when he was still a senator?

GA: Right.

WN: Because he became vice president in 1960.

GA: Nineteen sixty, that’s right. Became vice president, and became president in 1964 before the term was over.

TC: Then you also met him in Hawai‘i.

GA: Yes. In 1974. . . .

TC: Nineteen sixty-three was the assassination. So he became president in 1963. He was elected outright in 1964. Landslide. Then in 1968 he retired. He opted not to run.

So, did you meet him when he was still a senator in Hawai‘i? Was he vice president?

GA: I still have a picture of him riding in an automobile in an open car going around in Hawai‘i. I think that was the time when I met him here in Hawai‘i.

TC: I know when that was. It was 1965, or very early 1966. He went down King Street and there was this huge crowd.

GA: Right. I remember LBJ in another way. He was the one who took the brunt of all that protest on Vietnam. One of the reasons he stepped aside in 1968, was because he felt that his being there would be too disruptive to the political process. I remember very clearly one of the reasons he gave for not running, continued to be involved. I gained a further respect for him as a person. If you separate all the things that he did—I don't remember all the things he did as president, but separate that duty from the individual and things that he did, I really admired LBJ. I admired his family. I really like and admire Lady Bird and Luci.

TC: We've never gotten into this, but there was this always great underlying sort of partly psychological division over John F. Kennedy and LBJ, even though their careers were so intertwined. In the terms that we've talked about your perception and your feeling for these people, what was your feeling about John F. Kennedy?

GA: I think everything is timing. I think that he came along at the right time when the people needed a lift. Kind of appeal that he made to the people—we need your help. That's very important to be able to come to the people and to say we are at a very critical time in our country. You've got to come and you've got to participate, we need everyone to come together. That, to me, was John Kennedy's message at the beginning. I think that's very important.

A lot of times we think about pieces of legislation. I think just as important, is what a leader does to encourage people to come in and become part of an organization and to participate as citizens of this country.

MK: And that really resonated with you and your philosophy?

GA: Yes. That's what Jack Kennedy did.

TC: Did you meet Kennedy when he was in Hawai'i?

GA: Yes, I met him.

TC: What was that like?

GA: He was still a senator. Jeanie was really impressed with him. We just had a brief meeting, and later on he remembered Jeanie. I don't know whether he remembered me or not, (chuckles) but he remembered Jeanie. So Jeanie was really impressed with him.

TC: That was 1959?

GA: Yes, before he became president.

TC: Did you know Bobby Kennedy?

GA: No.

WN: We've got about two minutes before we switch tapes.

TC: Let me ask this. Do you remember Dr. [Martin Luther] King addressing the Hawai‘i legislature in 1959?

GA: No. Nineteen fifty-nine address to Hawai‘i legislature?

TC: He did.

WN: Really?

TC: Yeah. It seems to have gone unremarked, but I found a newspaper account of it. I think it’s amazing. Dr. King talked about Hawai‘i as a model for the future. It was amazing. When Kennedy came, that’s what he said too. You look at these people who are the great shapers of American history at that moment—Kennedy, Johnson, Dr. King. They were all deeply impressed by Hawai‘i. I think it’s amazing.

MK: At whose invitation did he come or for what purpose?

TC: I don’t know. I want to find out more about it. There were other African American leaders here at that time. People who are less well known today, such as James Farmer.

GA: He addressed the legislature?

TC: He addressed the legislature.

GA: I don’t remember that at all.

TC: Isn’t that amazing? I’m going to find the transcript of it and I’ll send it to you.

WN: Okay, let’s break and change tape.

(Taping stops then resumes.)

MK: This is tape two—part two—of session ten, July 11, 2012. Interview with Governor George Ariyoshi, with Tom Coffman, Warren Nishimoto, and Michi Kodama-Nishimoto present.

TC: Let me just pick up one little phrase. You said statehood was a joyous experience. What did you experience? You said you were with the man from the Mainland. Was there something that went through you? How did you experience this news?

GA: We all felt—I felt very strongly about statehood. When it became announced, I was overjoyed. I was so happy. Richard Goldman, he understood. When we first met we met at ‘Iolani Palace and a state announcement was made about statehood passing. He was talking about how he experienced joy in statehood because I was so overjoyed in statehood. For me, it was very important, because as a lawyer I appeared before all the judges who were appointed in Washington. I appeared and the legislature appeared before to have our bills reviewed by a governor who was not elected but appointed in Washington. So, appointment of all the judges in Hawai‘i by a Hawai‘i-elected executive was to me very, very important. It was important to do the work I was doing as a lawyer.

TC: I remember it from one of our earlier sessions. This was like one of the many ways I think these conversations have brought out parts of history that have never been brought out. You said something to the effect that you never had as a legislator—you never had any communication from Governor King. He wasn't answerable to you, he was not—I thought that was amazing. That was a testimony to how separate it was.

GA: I never met Governor King.

WN: You think it was a party thing? You think that the Republicans that were in the legislature talked with Governor King?

GA: No. I think the governor felt he owed his allegiance to people in Washington. Just going to do his job as governor. That did not include working with legislators.

MK: Republican or Democrat.

GA: He was a very aloof governor.

TC: I want to ask just briefly. This is really reaching, but we talked about Lyndon Johnson very meaningfully. Very important I think. President Kennedy as well. Did you have any sense of President Eisenhower or feeling positive or negative? Did he figure in your scope at that time?

GA: No. I think Washington was very far away for me, at that point.

MK: Also at this point, you felt Washington was far away, and you had always had this traditional link to Japan. Ethnically Japanese and you had served in Japan following the war. How important was Japan or Asia to you? How conscious were you of that part of the world in the late fifties?

GA: In the late fifties?

MK: Or, at about the time of statehood.

GA: I think statehood was the thing that made us think about what needed to be done outside of Hawai'i. We were very provincial until Hawai'i became a state. Everything was for the territory; we do things here on our own. But I think statehood opened up our minds, our vision about the world. We were more than just a territory; we were now a part of the United States, one equal part to any other state. I think at that point we began to look at how our economy needed to expand. I looked at Hawai'i—when Hawai'i became a state—fifteen years later and I looked at the period from 1959 to 1974 when I became governor. I looked at the change that had taken place. I think there was a very direct effort during that period to open up and become more than just Territory of Hawai'i, but become a state and fulfill our role as a part of the United States in the Pacific area. It had almost become a responsibility on our part to be a representative of the U.S. government in this region, this area.

MK: So with statehood, you're looking outside.

- GA: Became very outward. I think what happened in Hawai‘i indicates what that process resulted in. It became Hawai‘i—the population increased greatly, we had great numbers of people coming to Hawai‘i particularly from Japan. We had the economy moving from plantations—sugarcane, pineapple economy—to something very different. Different by that point, not that clearly identifiable. The changes taking place, the Big Five not having the kind of influence, still plantation playing a very vital role. Also it was more than just being a territory and we had to be now a part of the United States. An equal part, one of fifty states. Our responsibility in this region and we had to reach out into the Pacific.
- MK: Earlier Tom had mentioned LBJ was familiar with Hawai‘i. He said Martin Luther King had visited. There was some familiarity and knowledge about Hawai‘i and the social mix of the islands. Say with statehood and those early years, was there any sense that Hawai‘i could sort of be like a model, or we had something to share with the rest of the nation?
- GA: I think not in a broad sense, but in many ways it’s how Hawai‘i was acknowledged as a group of people. Many people talked at that time about, “You want to find a living democracy? It’s right here in Hawai‘i.” I think that’s the kind of the thing that we sensed. That’s why when Jack Burns got elected and started talking about Hawai‘i being a very special place but a feeling of inferiority amongst our people, his feeling was that we are all equal. We live together, but it requires more than that. There must be something that uplifts us between just getting along with people. We need to become and feel we’re just as good as anybody else on the outside. The fact that we can say we work together, live together, do things together, does not mean that we can’t reach out and become more than just a group of people together.
- TC: That’s a real evolution of society. Real evolution of a community. That’s a big step. In the researches I do on like the 1940s, people are concentrating on just simply staying together, living together. The words are simple, but it’s a huge shift.
- GA: I took that meaning, that message of Governor Burns, of Hawai‘i’s people feeling inferior, and it must not be that. We must reach out. His reference to Hawai‘i as being a very special place, I picked up a lot of that when I became governor. I talked about Hawai‘i being a very special place, a very special place because we have so many different groups who come together, work together, and do things together. Many other places, this kind of difference separates people. In Hawai‘i it does not. Because we are exposed to somebody else’s culture and because we say to each group you don’t have to become like somebody else. You remain who you are, what you do, and the way you do things. In that same way, being who you are and remaining who you are and the way you do things yourself, we can come together and work together.

That’s a special aspect of Hawai‘i to me that’s very important. When we do that, we not only come together and work together, but we expose—when you say don’t change and be who you are—your culture, your language, your music, you retain all of that. What happens is we are exposed to differences. As a result, we learn about their culture, about their music and their language. Not only become more tolerant, but we genuinely begin to understand and appreciate what somebody else’s differences are all about.

That’s what Hawai‘i to me is very special about. That’s what I picked up from Jack Burns. There were many times when I was governor, that’s what I really elaborated on. A

lot of my speeches I talked about being very special. Being very special does not mean that you're going to feel inferior. I remember going to Maui Community College and I talked about this. After I got through, two Filipino girls came up to me and they had tears in their eyes. They told me, "Governor, you made us really feel good."

I said, "What do you mean by 'feel good'?"

"Because, we felt that sometimes we were ashamed of being Filipino. We didn't want to say we were Filipinos. We wanted to get away from that. But when you started about be proud of who you are and you don't have to become like somebody else, you can remain just the person you are, we began to feel very strongly that we don't have to change. We can be proud of the fact that we are Filipinos."

I tell them, "Of course. That's what you do. You contribute to the society by being that person. You help other people by teaching them what it means to be Filipino, being tolerant of the things that you do. In the same kind of way, you've got to accept that I'm Japanese and that my culture I retain, and I hope that you can learn from my culture and you can learn that I can retain my culture and I can be very tolerant and I can get along with you and your Filipino culture."

MK: In your case, having grown up Japanese pre-statehood and everything, how did you feel about being Japanese? Were there any instances when you felt kind of ashamed being so Japanese?

GA: No, I never felt that. I always felt that it was more than just being Japanese and the culture. I think the values were very important, the things that I believed very strongly. The kind of things, Japanese words like *oya kōkō*, not forgetting those who help you. The fact that you have *giri*, responsibilities and *sekinin*, those kinds of things. All things that are very important, and they are Japanese values that were taught to me. I learned them as Japanese values. But to me they are values that are very important in our everyday life, to the point where I carried out some of the things in the way that I conducted my duty, doing things in a way that I didn't try to take credit for myself, trying to involve more people. Because I was willing to do that, more people were willing to get involved and participate, because the governor is not going to claim credit and I'm going to do this for him. It was they're doing it because they participate and making it possible for the good things to happen. It's not me and not my ideal making it happen. I talked about this many years ago, and you told me, "That's like the Chinese philosopher. . . ."

TC: Lao-Tzu.

GA: I still remember what you told me about his saying that people came together and they did things, at the end they began to feel it was their idea. That's what made it possible for achievements to take place. There was Japanese culture, Japanese ideas, Japanese values, but values that to me were important to every person. Not just Japanese.

TC: I sense something else that sticks in my mind on that level. There's a little biography of Dr. Alan Saunders. In it, he's quoted as saying, "It's amazing how much you can get done when you don't take the credit." He expressed it very simply and poetically. I thought, that's the same idea.

GA: Because of that—those values—when I became governor I would talk about directions that we had to move in, but more specific things to go there. I went to the legislature and I told them that we have these things that we can do. “You’ve got to get some credit for things that happened, but if you folks do this,” and I let them take the lead and I supported them and I made it possible for them to be able to say this is a good idea, because they have to run for office. They need credit also. That’s what I tried to do. So during my time as governor I had a very good relationship with the legislature. I was never disappointed that they could not get some things done. When I say never disappointed, I did not expect that everything that I wanted came by right away. I understood that some ideas take a while.

Like the state plans, I never pushed hard for all the functional plans because I knew that you got to massage and got to have people understand some of these things. There were some people saying you can’t predict the future so you can’t make any future plans because it always changes. My response to them, “You know what, it changes but if you don’t know what you’re going to do you’re going to have a hard time trying to get there.” So you can have some very general ideas about what you want to do, and in the process things happen and you can modify and try to accommodate to changes and the problems that come about. At the end, you’re going to end up where you really want to be. It’s a process that, I think, because of my feelings about getting people involved, that they are able to understand. I didn’t ask to get credit. What I wanted was to have people come together, participate, work together, and do things.

MK: Early in your interview you were talking about the importance of friendships. Try and explain to us how important are friendships like when you’re in the legislature and you’re trying to get things done. How important are friendships, especially in Hawai‘i?

GA: I used to call in legislators and have breakfast with them, and different groups. I let the speaker [of the house] and the senate [president] arrange the first few meetings because I wanted to be sure I invited the people that did want it. After that, I began to invite other legislators to come in. I wanted to develop a relationship with them and I wanted them to feel that they could come up to me and express their ideas. Nobody has all the ideas. Nobody is smart enough to say I know everything about every subject matter. A lot of it is in the minds of people who are directly involved with the people in the district. To me, that was very important for me to get their thinking, their ideas, their feelings. So, I maintained that kind of relationship. I had very, very good relationships with all the senators. Democrats and Republicans both. I didn’t discriminate against them when I had those meetings.

MK: When you were a state senator, how were your relations with other senators? There are twenty-five of you, and what was your way of relating to other senators?

GA: I think that I went and I expressed my feelings. I thought about any particular bill and I very candidly expressed my feelings and I discussed these things with Democrats and Republicans. Heb Porteus kind of came very close because I spoke like this. When [William] “Doc” Hill—the only time we had a Republican-controlled president, Doc Hill came to me one day to tell me how much he appreciated my relationship with all the senators. He told me, “As a token of my appreciation to you, I’m going to give you something for you to give for your children.” He gave me three uncirculated 1883 dollars.

He said, “These are uncirculated.” Because uncirculated, kind of valuable. He said, “I want your children to have them.”

I think I established that kind of relationship with legislators, when after the Maryland [land] bill, when it failed and the session after that John Lanham was representative. He was the chairman spearheading that effort on the house side. He came to see me, and he told me, “Tell me what your real reactions—why you feel very strongly. Not what the people say. What are your real feelings about this?”

“John, it’s very simple. I want everybody to be treated fairly. I don’t want someone to get hurt because we do this. We have 12,000 leaseholders, and 12,000 people who already have leases. You know the Maryland bill was not going to help these 12,000 people. Going to help future leaseholders. You know that if you have a person with a leasehold now, not going to get the benefit of this option to buy. Somebody built a home after that right next door and two properties come up for sale. One with the option, one without. If you came along, which one would you buy?”

“I’d buy the new one.”

“I think that’s right. So what happens to 12,000 leaseholders who already have the lease? Their property is going to devalue, have a hard time competing against the person who gets the option.” That’s what I meant by protecting. I could not go for it. But nobody listened to me. Nobody would listen to me about how important I felt these people were. The 12,000 people—these are not 12,000 individuals, these are 12,000 families. You multiply that by three or four people and the number of people in this community at that time who was going to be adversely impacted. For most people, that house and lot was the most important, largest asset for that family. That’s what we were going to impact so adversely.

MK: Maybe we should back up a little bit and just have your explanation of what the Maryland land bill was.

GA: The Maryland land bill would have given option to leaseholders to purchase their property. Option to buy property. But going to be available only to future leaseholders. Could not be given to existing leaseholders, because federal U.S. constitutional restrictions against affecting contracts. So, every person who had a leasehold property was not going to get benefit. Only future. So that’s what I was very concerned about. I did not feel that I could vote for something that even though I was for land reform, vote for something that would have an adverse effect. I felt everyone who came to talk to me, find a way that we can protect the 12,000 existing leaseholders. But nobody tried hard or [found a] kind of way.

MK: Who were the proponents? The real strong supporters of this bill?

GA: It was the Democratic party, and the senate majority at that time. Nelson Doi was the president, and they felt very strongly. When the first session started, this was not a priority bill, but as the session started to go by, it became a top priority bill. I got word down from the president. I was chairman of the ways and means committee, and I was told that if I didn’t go along, that I might end up losing my chairmanship. My response

was, send somebody down to replace me. I felt very strongly, I could not bargain away this thing to retain something. It was not a bargainable thing. It was something that was a matter of conscience to me.

When I stood up at the session, I talked about the importance of us doing what you feel has to be done. In my case, I felt I had to protect people who were not going to be helped, but in fact were going to be hurt. I feel very strongly about this. Other people may have different feelings, and I'm not objecting to other people having different feelings and not saying that I'm right and they're wrong. But they got to understand how strongly I feel about protecting people who had this. So, I told them, my comment was, "You have different people, have different point of views. I'm not condemning that. But please understand that I have these very strong feelings and I've got to live up to my feelings and cast my vote accordingly."

MK: So, the senate leadership said that if you don't vote that way, you'll lose the chairmanship of ways and means.

GA: That's right. I was told—I remember the carpenters union. Jack Reynolds [of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Council]. [Akito] "Blackie" Fujikawa [of the IBEW, 1186]. Coming to see me, and telling me that they had 10,000 votes, and that if I didn't come along they were going to all turn against me. My response again was, "Please don't talk to me about votes, because that's not going to make the difference to me." What was important for me, I'm for land reform. I want to have this thing passed too, but I want to do it in a way that will not hurt existing leaseholders. You find a way for me to do that, and I'm going to change. This was in the midst of my ways and means budget session for the last few days of the legislature. I was busy negotiating budget with the house, trying to put together good legislation. It was the first term after Governor Burns became elected governor, and so I wanted to have a budget that was responsible, that wouldn't put him on the spot without us acknowledging the importance of us doing the right things.

TC: Jack Reynolds and Blackie Fujikawa were very tough guys.

GA: That's right. You know what? After this was all over, Jack Reynolds became a very close friend of mine. Jack Reynolds was picked by the governor to become our collective bargaining negotiator. I had that relationship with Jack Reynolds. He came to see me, and he told me, "You know, we were on the other side and we campaigned hard against you. We felt very strongly about you. But now, we understand and we appreciate the kind of person you were and what you tried to do."

I was told by Democrats that it was embarrassing to the campaign talking about the Maryland bill in the 1964 election. So please don't talk about that, talk about you being chair of the ways and means committee and you're going to get reelected. My response was, "My reelection is not the point. I made a particular position and I want the people to understand what I did. I want them to understand a more important factor, which is that the fact that we believe in some issues does not mean we're just going to go along with it without concern about how we go about doing it. I'm concerned for land reform, but I'm concerned about us doing it the right way so we don't hurt people."

MK: Who were some of the other groups or people that were on your side of the issue?

GA: The Hawaiians were. The Kawaiaha'o Church Reverend [Abraham] Akaka was very strongly for me. We had so many telephone calls. I felt really badly about being at the legislature and Jeanie all alone, so I had to ask my friends to come to the house and stay with Jeanie while I was at the legislature. We used to get nasty, nasty calls.

MK: To your home?

GA: To my home, yeah. People so angry, feeling so strongly about the Maryland bill that they were calling me and telling me what a bastard I was. They swore at me. One day I came home, and Jeanie was on the telephone. I took that phone away. I listened. The guy thinking that he's just giving it to her, about what a terrible person I am and everything I did. So when I took the telephone call, I told the person, "You're not talking to my wife, but I think you're terrible to call my wife and talk to my wife. She does not vote. I vote. For you to talk to her the way you did, if you feel that strongly about it and you want to give me a beating and you want to have it out with me, you know where my home is and you come over and I'll meet you outside." I was really angry at the guy, and he wouldn't respond. I tell him, "You coming?" The guy wouldn't say anything to me. I told him, "You're not worth talking to." I just slammed the phone on him.

Because of that I was very concerned about the telephone calls, so I had some people [George Teshima, Jack Taniyama, and Yoshito Sagawa] come over to the house and they answered the phone. They told me that that night they remember very clearly twenty-eight telephone calls, all very nasty. Swearing and yelling and screaming about what a terrible guy I was and the vote that I was taking. How terrible it was.

During the next campaign, when they were concerned about [GA's vote on the Maryland land bill] I broke away from the party's campaign. I had two coffee hours. Each one lasting about an hour. Only for me, so I could meet with people I could explain the bill to. I had two messages. Number one, explain the bill and what it would have done to existing leaseholders, and that was my concern. But secondly, an even more important issue. As a Democrat, am I just going to go along with everything that people say because it's the Democratic party platform, irrespective of how it was going to impact the people? I felt that the Democrats had very principled policies to believe in. I felt that the Democrat had the responsibility of taking everything and not necessarily also going along with every plank on the platform, but exercising judgment and what you consider to be good or bad or right or wrong. That's a position to me that was very important, and that's what I also explained during the session.

The reaction I got was, every session, people came to me and told me, "We didn't understand what the bill was all about. Thank you very much for taking all of the pressure for standing up. Secondly, we believe also that Democrats must understand the platform and principles, but must be sure that you vote your conscience. If you disagree, you got to say you disagree and you got to both go along, because we can't expect everybody to be 100 percent together." Those two things were reinforced to me. The third group came to me was, "We disagree with the position you took on the issue itself, but we admire the fact that you were willing to stand up with what you believed. We think

that it's important to have people like you in the legislature. Even though we disagreed, we're going to support you."

MK: What did the Democratic party think of you though?

GA: The party itself, they were disappointed. They were disappointed. But during the campaign, nobody did anything. It was individuals. I remember Duke Kawasaki taking strong positions against me, and very falsely stating what the issues were. I remember speaking on the Japanese program and I spoke about principles, the Maryland bill. When I got to explaining the bill, people were telling me they didn't understand what the bill was all about. "In fact, you were helping us not hurting us," leaseholders telling me that. I was ready to leave the station because I had another appointment that evening, when the station manager came to me and stopped me and told me there's a telephone call.

I said, "Oh, I have another schedule."

"No, this lady, you've got to take this call. This lady telling me she has to speak to you."

So I went back and took the telephone call, the lady crying. "Mr. Ariyoshi-san, *gomennasai*. I'm sorry. I really felt badly about you, and I have to talk to you to tell you that I felt so badly about you, and now I understand and I feel bad that I felt such bad feelings about you. Please forgive me. *Gomennasai*." She felt she had to talk to me to tell me that. I think a lot of people felt during the campaign that was the situation.

Next election, John Lanham came to see me, and he told me that he was still interested in Maryland bill. The impact, what can be done to help existing leaseholders. He wanted to know what my feelings were. When I explained it, he told me he understands. He came back and we talked many times. He'd come back to me with some things, I tell him, "No, Johnny. That doesn't help." So he came back many times, and I began thinking about it also. We finally came out and decided that the only way that it could help existing leaseholders was condemnation, where the government condemned all the leasehold properties to the point where at the request of the people, they want a condemning authority to do that. So, if a place in Hale'iwa or some place or Hālawā wanted it, they could get together and vote to ask the governor—the state to condemn. That's the bill that was passed. Because of that, we had many existing leaseholders who could not buy the property who became owners through the condemnation process.

MK: How did Hawaiians react to that?

GA: They didn't react very strongly. They went along. They felt that people wanting to buy and own their homes was something very legitimate. We ourselves would want to do that if we were in that situation. But you're doing it in a way that is not helpful to them. We're paying value, we're going to condemn. Paying value for what they have. We told them also, the Hawaiians, that now your money is all tied up in the land. You can take this money and you go into the stock market, you can buy other values besides just land. You can have other kinds. That's what's happened to Bishop Estate today. It's not just ownership in land, but it's ownership in other assets that have made it very valuable.

MK: So Bishop Estate didn't come out strongly against that?

GA: No, they did not. They gave some speeches. They expressed some feelings about their concern, but more an expression of concern about how they were going to get treated fairly.

MK: Going back to the original Maryland land bill vote and everything, how did Governor Burns react to all this?

GA: Governor Burns saw me and he came to me and he told me, “Thank you very much, because you saved me the problem of maybe having to deal with a veto of the measure.”

I said, “You were going to veto?”

He said he would have considered a veto. Not that he would have vetoed, but he would have considered the possibility of having to veto.

WN: On the same grounds that you had?

GA: Yes. He had the same kind of concern.

WN: Unfair to the existing leaseholders.

GA: Right. And I think he went a little bit further. He felt that we should not be taking this kind of step. Not the kind of thing government should be too much involved in. Kind of a private deal.

As a result, after the Leasehold Conversion Act became law in 1966 and Governor Burns didn’t do anything about implementing the legislation. It was only after I became lieutenant governor that I talked to him about this. He told me, “You go work it out.”

TC: It was ’67 actually. It was a detail for the record. Same idea.

GA: So it was after I became lieutenant governor that I took Governor Burns up on it. Until then, Governor Burns ignored the legislation—law—and didn’t do anything. When I talked to him about it, he told me, “You go find some place where you can work this out.” I remember a property in Mānoa that was owned by a Chinese person that we tried to work this out. We ran into all kind of problems trying to work the thing out. Then, when I became governor my housing director was a person—who was Henry Kaiser’s...?

TC: David Slipher.

GA: Slipher, yeah. He became my housing director. He was a person who developed many properties and understood leasehold properties very well. I talked to him and I told him why I wanted him as housing director, what his primary responsibility was going to be was trying to get these leasehold converted to fee simple. “You know more about it from the leaseholder side and the owner side, therefore to me you’ll be a very ideal person to help me work this out.” He came, and he told me he agrees in principle that the thing was right. So he would help me. He was invaluable. I was so lucky to have a person like David Slipher coming. He helped me—the conversions started coming about.

I remember Henry Peters was trustee of the Bishop Estate. Henry came to me. He told me, “I trust you Governor. I know that you’re going to be fair. You’re not going to be just trying to take lands away, but you’re going to acknowledge land ownership on the part of Bishop Estate.”

I told him, “No Henry, we’re not going to take value away. It’s going to be beneficial to both people, and beneficial to Bishop Estate. You’re going to get cash that you can take and you can buy other assets. Beneficial to our side because they have to own that property and now they have a sense of value of ownership.”

WN: I just wanted to ask you about that original bill vote again. It was thirteen to twelve, right? You were in essence considered the swing vote and you took the heat. How does your vote or that vote become so critical? Did you declare in favor of it before, or anything like that?

GA: No. They asked me. They asked me, those who were in favor of the legislation asked me not to publicly indicate what my position was. Nobody knew. They wanted me to keep that private. The hope was that at some point they could persuade me into changing my vote—voting for the measure. The unions felt like that, the president Nelson Doi felt very strong about it. The senate leadership felt strongly about that. They tried to convince me until the very end. Finally I had to tell them. This thing has come up for vote and we’re prepared to cast my vote.

WN: The twelve—I mean thirteen that voted for it, was it pretty much on party lines?

GA: No. The three that voted against the measure were Harry Fields and they excused Harry Fields because he was Hawaiian. Mits Kido, and they excused Mits Kido because he was a developer. But George Ariyoshi was not a developer and nothing to gain from this bill one way or the other. They felt very strongly that I was the one who should have cast the thirteenth vote in favor of the legislation.

I think it was thirteen to twelve, and there were three votes. So I think Republicans had eleven votes, but I have a feeling that they didn’t have eleven Republican votes. I think that was because Bernard Kinney—I think Bernard Kinney was the one Republican who was not going to go along with the measure. Bernard Kinney was on Big Island, and he was Hawaiian. Same reason Harry Fields would not go. But they were excused. But me, I was not excused. Thirteen votes and I was the one casting the deciding vote against the measure. Even though I’m Ariyoshi and I’m the third person to vote.

TC: I want to try to loop back to when you mentioned Mits Kido. I was reminded, I think in the very last of the last session—I was telling Warren and Michi that you said some very interesting things about Mits Kido’s run for lieutenant governor with John A. Burns. I wonder if you could describe that to them, first of all, because they left early.

MK: We missed that, yeah.

TC: They missed that, and maybe you could expand on it, because I thought it was very interesting and relative to you later on. Could we go back to that?

GA: I think that Jack Burns wanted Mits Kido because he felt that Mits Kido would be able to give encouragement, strength to others who felt they could never aspire to higher positions. It's either legislators—house or senate members. I think that Jack Burns felt that Mits Kido would be the person who can help. My best recollection now is Mits Kido ran in the 1963 election. That 1959, first gubernatorial election, Jack Burns. I think Spark Matsunaga.

TC: Michi looked it up.

MK: Yeah. I think Kido and Matsunaga ran against each other in the primary.

GA: Were they against each other?

MK: Then, Kido just narrowly, narrowly beat Matsunaga.

GA: So it was in the first state election. That's right, because 1963 it was Bill Richardson.

MK: I know that you can't really speak for Governor Burns, but why was Kido the one and not Matsunaga?

GA: I think Kido was closer to the Jack Burns faction than Spark Matsunaga was. I think Spark was more outside of the Jack Burns faction. I think also that Jack Burns had some relationship with Mits Kido way before he got involved in politics.

That was during the meetings during the war years, Emergency Service Committee meetings where Jack Burns was very concerned and working very closely with helping the Japanese community. You know, Jack Burns unfortunately—in 1954, about that time—many Japanese used the word, *inu*, dog. That he was a kind of spy for the American government, spied against the Japanese. I think that came about because they didn't understand Jack Burns's relationship to [Robert] Shivers and some of the other people. The FBI and Emergency Service Committee, how Jack Burns was trying to look at what was important and necessary and trying to protect Japanese. That relationship made, I think, people feel, they suspected, that he was working close to the FBI as a spy against the Japanese.

But that relationship with Kido goes back I think to the time when Mits Kido was very actively involved in Emergency Service Committee, when that group was talking about after the war, what's going to happen to the Japanese. So that kind of concern was being expressed at the Emergency Service meetings that were being held. That's the relationship that Jack Burns had in addition to Kido being I think closer to the Jack Burns faction than Sparky.

MK: Since Burns kind of wanted Kido to be the lieutenant governor, do we just assume that Burns also wanted Kido to eventually become governor?

GA: That's right. That's right. Because, the reason why he wanted Kido was because he felt that—not lieutenant governor. Anybody could become lieutenant governor. The real test was, who could become governor. He felt that so long as we didn't have somebody who could become governor, the people would have an inferiority complex. That they could

not make it. That it was not their role, not for them to play that role. So very same faction, and I think it was strengthened when he started talking to me. I think he became even more strengthened about the desire and the need for me to become lieutenant governor. But not so much to become lieutenant governor, but for me it became available, ready to run in '74 for the governorship. That's what he ultimately felt the dream was all about.

So when I got elected 1974, that campaign, I went to the hospital before I went to my campaign headquarters. I didn't go until I was certain the election was going to be okay. I went to the hospital to see Jack Burns. I went there for the purpose of thanking him for his support and everything he did for me, and everything he did for nisei, *Nikkei*, Japanese Americans. And, the rest of the people in Hawai'i. His only response to me was, "Don't thank me. I want to thank you for making my dreams come true." That's the only conversation that took place. Very short. He knew I had to go to the campaign headquarters, and he was not going to hold me up long. He was grateful that I had come over to tell thank you to him, but he wanted to express his thanks to me for making his dreams come true. That's why he and I felt I could go—time for me to go to campaign headquarters and meet the supporters and to express my gratitude to them for their help.

MK: So it's like this dream that he had for decades, and finally.

GA: I could just feel that in him when he told me, "Don't thank me. I want to thank you for making my dreams come true."

TC: Why do you think that to become the chief executive of the state was such an important step as opposed to being U.S. Senator, U.S. Congressperson, state senator even, et cetera? Why is that executive power distinct in this story?

GA: Because Jack Burns had indicated that he was much closer to the people. The senators out there, the congressmen out there, they don't come in contact with the people. The governor, every day, the issues that are important to the people are coming out. Every day, he is meeting with people from Hawai'i. The opportunity to talk to them and try to inspire them is there on a very daily basis. When Jack Burns told me in 1970—1969 between Christmas and New Year's—that he wanted me to listen to him, wanted me to understand what he was really talking about, he said, "Please listen to me very carefully. No person other than a white person has ever become governor of Hawai'i. No person, other than a person born outside of Hawai'i, has ever become governor of Hawai'i. You can break that, and you can make it possible for people to feel that a person from Hawai'i—a non-white person—can succeed in that office. And you can become that kind of inspiration to the people of Hawai'i."

It's important for the governor, because the governor is the person who deals on a daily basis with Hawai'i's people. To inspire, to make them feel that things can happen in our community. That office was the office that had that contact, that had that relationship, that performed the duties that affected people on a daily basis. It had to be somebody who was from Hawai'i, a non-white person who could give that kind of inspiration to Hawai'i's people. That's what Jack Burns felt. That's what he felt when he told me, "Thank you for making my dreams come true." I just could feel that. It wasn't necessary for him to say anything more to me, for me to say anything more to him.

We understood what the election was all about. Not just becoming governor, but becoming—removing that complex, barrier that existed. After that, people could now feel, “I can go up. I can move up.”

MK: Shall we end here today?

TC: Thank you, Governor.

MK: Governor, thank you. It’s a good way to end today’s session.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-20-11-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

September 19, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

MK: This is an interview with Governor George Ariyoshi on September 19. This is our eleventh session. The interviewers are Tom Coffman, Warren Nishimoto, and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. So, after many months break, we’re going to resume our interview series.

TC: We needed to backtrack a little bit on your legislative career. I think we did some really great work on uncovering things that have never really been said about the 1954 election and the functioning of the house of representatives in those early years, your role and your relationships to other people’s roles.

It sort of puts us over to your senate years, and just a couple of areas I think that we need to focus on. The facts of those years are, for the most part, fairly well known. Certainly people know what your roles were. In the vein of what happened, I think the most meaningful thing that we can do is to go back to the questions of how things happened, why things happened, and how you felt about it. This is more of Michi’s whole life [interviewing method]. How did you relate to this in terms of your entire person, entire development? And, in the senate, you at a very young age really, became ways and means chairman. So, you had one of the two or three, some people think, say the most important role in that legislative body. Your philosophy about government finance was evolving quickly, I would say. What would you tell people about how you approached it and how you thought—how that approach related to your past and what you brought to the table there?

GA: I think I set out with my own cultural background. My parents who used to tell me spend monies if you have to, but don’t spend unnecessarily. *Muda zukai wo shinai yō ni*. That means, unnecessary things don’t spend monies for. That’s basically the kind of background that I had, my own personal financing.

So when I became the finance chairman in 1963 session, that was the first term, first legislative session for Governor Burns. I was very mindful of that relationship and mindful of what I wanted to do to be sure we didn’t put burdens on the governor that were unreasonable. He sent down a budget that was balanced only because he was including some fees that we needed to increase. From the very beginning, I sensed that we could not get those increases because there were some very strong objections to those

increase in fees. So we had to deal with balancing the budget without the increase that the governor had provided in the budget. I wanted to do it in a way that provided a meaningful opportunity for people—members on the committee—for them to get the things they felt very strongly about. Patsy Mink was feeling especially strongly about education and wanting more monies there. But I was very mindful of the fact that if we over appropriated and over authorized when the monies are not there, we were going to be putting a terrible burden on Jack Burns's first term. I was very mindful of that and I didn't want to put that burden on Governor Burns. We could have gone on and said, "We did it," but let the governor suffer. So I became very mindful of that.

Incidentally, because of that feeling that I had, I think it carried over when I became governor—the notion that the governor had responsibilities and I was willing to accept responsibility when I became governor. My message to the legislators at that time was, "It's okay. You can put the burden on me. You can put anything you want, but understand that I can only spend monies that I have and I'm going to do that on a very responsible basis."

So all of this I think started getting me thinking on government financing, the relationship between the role of the governor and the legislature and vice versa, how it relates to each other and how we had to work with each other to make things happen. For me, I didn't want to put any burden on the governor from the legislative side. When I became governor, I was willing to accept that burden if the legislators could go and say they did things. From our side, I voluntarily told the legislators, "Put anything you want in there. Don't worry about having to make ends meet. Go through that process but understand that when it comes to me, I'm going to be responsible and spend only what I can afford."

So that period of [chairing] ways and means [committee] was a period when I began to go from my own personal financial philosophies and activities to translating that to how the government ought to operate, then to the role of the legislature compared to the role of the executive and how we interact.

TC: So you did have that famous incident when your committee split and Patsy and [Nadao] Yoshinaga and John Ushijima walked out on you and they left you hanging, et cetera. I wonder how you felt about their action. It's a very contentious thing that they did.

GA: Well, at the very outset I indicated to the committee that we could accept the governor's budget more or less. We can make some modifications within that budget. But, very key to all of this was our willingness to go along with increasing the fees that the governor wanted. My feeling was that we had to make that decision very early, because everything else depended on what we [decide]. There were very strong feelings from all members of the committee against increasing those fees. So now we're stuck with about \$12-15 million that we were not going to be receiving. At that time the budget was \$130 million budget. It was \$12 million that was almost 10 percent of the budget. We had to make those reductions.

During the course of that session, while we were going through on the senate side, ways and means side, we had very, very good discussion and cooperation, including the Republican member, Randy Crossley. We all worked together. We put the budget together, and there was some concerns expressed about the fact that we wanted more

monies for education. I told Patsy that any monies that we can save, make any cuts you folks want to, any monies we can save from those cuts, we can put into education. We did. We put as much as we could into education. So I felt that we were working together quite nicely.

Then when we have to work on budget negotiations with the house, they felt very strongly about it because we didn't want to have any increase in the fees, they felt very strongly that we had to stay with the governor's budget minus the increase in fees. So we had a great deal of discussion on that. At one point, I decided—and we had met for about a week in that conference committee—I decided that we had to bring this matter to head. I called the committee together and I told them that we had done everything we can to increase the monies for education. We had made cuts in various areas so that we can increase that. We started off with \$12 million aside because of the refusal of everybody to go along with the increases, so I told them it's time we came to a conclusion on this. We can't continue to go on like this. So I suggested that we make the necessary cuts on the budget and that we give as much as we can to education, but we cannot hang on to that total budget figure that Patsy especially wanted. Patsy came to me after that meeting. She told me that if that's the position that we are going to be taking, we're giving in to what the house side wants.

I said, "No, we're not giving in to the house. We're going along on the basis of monies that are available, and we have done the very best. I have told you Patsy, that we can make all the cuts we can make elsewhere and put every single cut that we can make—savings into increasing the education budget. We have done that. Unless we increase the revenues, we can't do anything further."

Her response was, "But we can put it in, and maybe the monies can be found later on."

My response was, "That's putting a tremendous burden on the governor. For us to say we put all this money and it's good that we increased the education budget. Let the governor be the person who makes the cut." But we were supposed to do that.

She told me that that's her condition and she's sticking by it. She said, "I'm prepared to walk out. When I do, Nadao Yoshinaga is going to walk out with me. And John Ushijima."

Najo came to me. During that first state election for [U.S.] Congress when Patsy ran against Dan Inouye, he [Nadao Yoshinaga] took a position for Dan against a Maui colleague. Burnt some fences doing that. I guess he felt that what Patsy's asking for—an increase in the education budget is something he could support and therefore he's got to go along with her. Then he told me John Ushijima was also prepared to go because John was a wartime buddy. John was willing to go along with him.

Then I called Harry Fields. Harry Fields had just gotten elected and I knew that Najo had been very helpful in his election campaign. So I called Harry in, and I told him, "Harry, this is going to happen. If you felt because of your relationship with Najo and what happens on Maui, if you felt you had to walk out I will understand."

He looked at me and he took his hands out, he grabbed my hand. He's a big, tough, big person. Grabbed my hands and he said, "George, Najo helped me in this campaign and I'm very grateful to him and I will forever remain grateful to him. But that doesn't mean that he still has to control my actions as a senator. Everything that I know about state government, you taught me. The hours we spent together after the ways and means committee." During those days we have morning meetings, afternoon meetings, evening meetings, and we adjourned at ten o'clock. He said, "Every time I had any question, you stayed beyond ten o'clock with me. You helped me understand state government. Najo helped me get elected, but you helped me understand state government. You're correct and I'm with you and I'm not going to walk out." For me, that was a very, very gratifying response I got from Harry Fields, a new member who just got elected. I felt that he was going to be a very good legislator in the future. But that's what happened.

Then, what's that Republican? I just mentioned his name.

TC: Crossley.

MK: Crossley.

GA: Yeah, Randy Crossley. Randy came up to me and he told me, "I'm a minority member, but you have been fair to me. You have given me all the latitude to say and explore anything that I wanted to explore. You've treated me like any other member of the committee." He said, "I agree with your position. I am going to stick by you." So I called the rest of the committee members, and they all told me they're going to stick it out with me.

TC: So was there a moment in this scenario when physically, Patsy and Najo and John actually walked out the door? There was. They stood up from the table and walked out?

GA: My best recollection now is just that they left.

TC: Were you angry?

GA: No. I understood. I understood their feelings, but I felt that the position I was taking and what I wanted to do was the more reasonable, logical, responsible position. I felt that as chair, that's the position I had to take. So, I've never felt at any time in my legislative career that anybody who disagrees with me was wrong in disagreeing. I felt they had their own reasons, their own perspective. You can have an issue where people are all distinctive, have great disagreements. It can be because of whatever, however their beliefs are, what they do, the kind of things that they've been used to. So I always felt that people must be free. I must understand if they take positions. So I was never really angry. I never struck back at them when I was speaking at the legislature and asking approval.

TC: A lot of people do get angry in that setting when there's great stress like that. What do you make of that process? What is the difference between the response of get angry or accept that these are just legitimate differences? What is the difference between the two in terms of democratic process?

GA: Well, I don't think you can draw a line. I think anything that comes up, you have to go on the basis that somebody disagrees. For example, nobody took it up with me, and earlier the first state legislature when I told them—when I had to go along with Sam King and give them the thirteenth vote necessary for his confirmation. They [those who opposed confirmation] didn't like it and tried to tell me that I had to stick together. But they didn't take anything out on me later. They accepted that. I think that's the big difference between what we had then and what it is today. I think we're better off if we acknowledge that people can be different. We don't ask people to come along because we want them to come along. I think that the process works best when you permit everybody to exercise their best judgment. Their best judgment must also be related to their beliefs as Democrats or Republicans. To me there is a difference.

I just wanted to add here, it reminded me of an article that I just saw recently after the Republican convention. I think these were AJA individuals who were talking about 1954 and how they were talking about why we became Democrats instead of becoming Republicans. They made a statement that we were forced to become Democrats because we were not invited by the Republicans. That's not the situation. Nobody forced us to become Democrats. It was a total misinterpretation of what 1954 is all about.

Nineteen fifty-four, I became a Democrat because I felt, together with the others, that we were going to come in and change things that were being done by the Republicans. The change was very important. It wasn't a case of us not being liked by them or being prevented from joining them. Later on some things like that happened, like the Pacific Club membership and those things. But that was separate from the political process. For me, it was not because I was not welcome in the Republican party. I just became a Democrat at the time that I filed. I filed and I became a Democrat because I felt very strong about the fairness issue, that we were not living in a community where we were recognized and acknowledged, that people should be advanced on the basis of their ability, not on the basis of who they knew. My vote on the Sam King thing reflected that need for fairness in this community. When I read the article, I thought it was very unfair for them now to talk about 1954 when they weren't there, and for them to try to make an assessment of what prompted us to become Democrats. For me it was very strong feelings about what we had to do.

MK: That shows that people just don't understand history, yeah?

GA: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: I have a question. When you look at the makeup of the legislature at that time, in the early [19]60s, you have many people who had longstanding relationships. Friendships. Also, just maybe even coming from the same island. Like you said, Patsy Mink and Najo, both Maui people. So you have these relationships and then you have these issues that you folks are dealing with. How do you balance relationships with coming up with the right decisions on issues?

GA: I think it basically comes down to the question, when do you compromise? What kinds of compromises are okay and what are not okay? As far as I'm concerned, there are some things that don't really involve principles—questions of right or wrong. You know you can make compromise on some of those areas, but if you become very issue-oriented and

principled, that'll become involved. There isn't any room for compromise. You've got to do what you believe very strongly.

That's why on the Maryland bill too, when I took that position and I spoke on the floor, I indicated at the very beginning that I'm not saying I'm right and you're wrong. We can have differences of opinion, but you've got to understand that I have very strong feelings. You've got to make the leeway to take that position and to say and maintain that position and not go along and not compromise.

TC: Warren, go ahead.

WN: Was it easier to disagree with a Republican as opposed to disagreeing with a fellow Democrat?

GA: No. Once you get elected, I don't think it makes a difference. If you disagree on issues of principles, you disagree whether that person is Democrat or Republican.

TC: I want to go back to just briefly what you illuminated about your evolution on thinking through government finance in relationship to your values that you brought. Then, the responsibility of the executive. What defines a responsible legislator who really does shoulder responsibility? In that give-and-take which was very crucial to Governor Burns's first term, did you have conversations or a conversation with him? How extensive was that?

GA: In our committee, we had people going through very small details to try and make cuts. I met the governor one day and we talked and I told him, "Governor, I'm going to give you the best shot we possibly can. I'm going to try to protect you from getting accused for making cuts. You should not get accused of that. I'm going to do that." But I told him, "As I sat in the legislature and I watched people making the cuts, making monetary cuts and releasing that item, it's hard for us in the legislature to look at how efficient you ought to be. I can't sit there and say that a person in the department, director, is going to be very responsible or irresponsible. Or is going to try to make savings and just go along with what we authorized to spend. That's something the legislative branch cannot do. I want to know the governor whether or not, you, no matter what we provided, you can look at the budget and you can make whatever savings you can. For me, if I told you, you can spend a million dollars and you spend less than a million dollars, I'm not going to get upset that you didn't spend all the authorized funds."

He told me, "Of course I'm going to do that. That's my responsibility."

I told him, "Okay, that's all I wanted to know." I just felt that—he told me that he'll work it out and try to save monies to the extent he could.

That's what happened when I became governor also, when I told them, "You can put anything you want in there. But I will only spend what I have. I also told them that if you authorize me to spend monies and if I can get by with spending less monies to get that program through, that's a responsibility that I have." My feeling was at the end, the only person who can stand between the government being fiscally responsible is the governor, because the legislature is projecting. They can be very fiscally responsible, but they're

only projecting. Monies have to be spent by the governor based on what actual revenue is realized. So that's where the responsible part has to come in.

TC: How would you describe, evaluate, your relationship with the governor at that point? You weren't that well acquainted, or were you? Did you feel like you were becoming well acquainted?

GA: Yes. I felt that he and I had gotten very close. That was the legislative session when we had the Maryland bill also.

TC: Why do you think you had this rapport, because people generally didn't think of you as one of the Jack Burns faction. What was happening and what did you see in him?

GA: When Jack Burns first ran for delegate, Bert Kobayashi, Russell Kono, Alfred, and I—we got together with him. We talked about how important it was for the whole party to get behind him and we wanted to take a stab at getting Tom Gill faction involved in this process so that we support and come together. We tried and we could not. During that process I got to understand Jack Burns. I got to understand him when the state of Alaska comes first. That was a tough position for him to take. Hawai'i was going to become the forty-ninth state. That's what we wanted to be. For him to let Alaska come first because he believed that's the key. To me that was a very responsible action.

Later I began to feel very strongly about what the governor was thinking—how much of a very prudent person [he was], very idealistic. So I began to develop a very strong feeling for Governor Burns. That's when I began to feel that I don't want to be unfair to him and put the burden on him and us look good because we put everything we want in there and let him suffer by having to make the cuts necessary.

MK: Why did you feel that way towards him that you would not want to put him in a bad situation? Why would you care?

GA: It wasn't just caring for him, but it was also my feeling that I have to be responsible. That I couldn't just take advantage of the situation and let him be the bad person and us be very clean. I think it's—what we felt we didn't want to do to him, but also for us to feel we have our responsibility to him. We can't shirk it and we can't let somebody else look bad because we wanted to look good.

MK: You know, I'm kind of puzzled in that as you, as a legislator, you were willing to take the rap if people were critical of the budget and you would try to help the governor so that he wouldn't have to make the cuts. But later on, when you became governor, you told the legislature, "Come up with the budget and I will be the one. . . ." Why is that?

GA: Because, you see, when I was in the legislature I didn't want to pass the burden on to somebody else. But, I was willing to have some of them put it to me so long as they understood that I was going to act very responsibly and not just go along because they put things in, and I acknowledged that different legislators sometimes have to go through very difficult situations. I was, in a way, wanting to help them in that process. I also felt that to be responsible, it was not just looking at that budget then, but also looking at the next four or five years. I just felt that I could not, when I became governor, spend on the

basis of that's the revenue then without concern of what impact it will have on the next three or four years.

TC: In terms of how you experienced things, you had this—I can't add up how young you were, but I think you were twenty-eight when you were first elected. So, by 1966, you were forty I guess. You were still in your late thirties. Your political career trajectory kept going like this, but you were never pushing. You're not much of a self-promoter, right? Which is a major political pastime for a lot of people. But you then hit the really hard stuff of the Maryland bill and the controversy that went on and the opposition of the party. You responded by pulling back from the party campaign and you hit on that tremendous succession of coffee hours and reaching out to people, explaining to people, et cetera. My question is, what you experienced in that reaching-out process, because I think that was new for you. You had to extend yourself, I'm guessing, in a way that you never had before. You were connecting with people on another level. What about that?

GA: I guess for me that election meant not just a desire to get elected, but also to educate the people. To make people feel that they have responsibilities in this process too. They have to be reasonable and they have to understand the issues and understand legislators and positions that they take. For me, what was gratifying out of it all was at the end of every coffee hour, people tell me, "We're sorry, we didn't understand. Thank you for taking all the pressure and standing by." The other response I got, "We disagreed with you on the issue and what you should have done, but we really greatly support the idea that you're coming back and having us understand what took place." To me, that election was more than just my election. I was very interested in having the people become educated.

Because of that election, subsequently, I was able to tell people who wanted to run for office and who were elected, don't put your hands up in the wind up there. A leader must not do that. A leader must understand what the issues are. You understand it better because all the process, all the arguments that come to you, the hearings that you have, and you are best able to understand what the issues are and how you have to decide. You make a decision on that basis and go back to the people and tell them what you did and that's the process that makes democracy work best. Because of that 1964 election, I was able to talk to any one of the people—people come to me now and they talk to me and I am able to tell them that we have a responsibility of going to the people who support us and going back to tell them what happened and why we did things. Why we did things are very, very important.

TC: So it was a transition as you're describing it, into engaging with the public on a deeper level and performing a sort of additional role as truly an educator who is in a dialogue with people. It's not how people think of politicians usually.

GA: Rather than a transition, I think that's what we—you go through different problems and different steps in different things that you do. You begin to develop your own personal ideas, what it is that you have to do in order to be able to lead. For example, when I became governor I used the commission process—boards and commissions. I appointed various kinds of people. Great diversity I wanted. I took part in almost every swearing-in ceremony. I wanted to tell people who were being commissioned, "If you look at the boards and commissions that you're going to be serving on, you will find yourself very different from others who serve on the board. That's by design, and I did it because we

are a very diverse community. I want each of you to be able to participate in that process so that diversity is represented on each board and commission.” I told them, “In order for this you’ve got to speak up. You’ve got to put your thoughts and ideas on the table. It’s better to have that done there, because now you have a chance to select many different ideas instead of having the whole group being led by one strong leader who leads you in one direction.” For me, that process was very, very important. I learned from that process also, and I learned from people who disagreed with me who came out and spoke very strongly about what we were doing. I learned from them that I had an opportunity now to test my own hypothesis.

TC: How are we doing? I have one thing that I think we need to interject into this in the 1966 election. The 1966 election on the lieutenant governor was uniquely divisive between Tom Gill and Kenny Brown. It was really uniquely divisive between what Governor Burns wanted versus what Tom Gill wanted for laying the future of Hawai‘i. As you watched that play out, Governor Burns is seizing on Kenneth [Brown] as lieutenant governor as the potential future of Hawai‘i, and Tom Gill and all of the very contentious events that followed—what was your feeling about that level of conflict and the nature of that conflict?

GA: I think I felt strongly about it later on after I became lieutenant governor when I started to work closely with Governor Burns. At one dinner, Mrs. Burns told me, “I can’t tell you how happy I am that you are there now. The problems that existed during the other lieutenant governor when Governor Burns had difficulty leading the state and going to meetings and felt he had to come back quickly. Governor now goes to meetings and he feels very comfortable and he’s not afraid. He (trusts your judgment and) feels very confident that you are going (to do what you believe and do what is) right.” When Mrs. Burns told me that, I began to understand how strongly Governor Burns felt in that 1966 election. I understood also that Governor Burns had worked very closely with Kenny Brown. Kenny had come not as an employee, but he was there full time helping in the governor’s office, and the governor felt very strongly he needed someone like that. So, I understood later on better than I did when it was happening in 1966. But I did wonder why Governor Burns was taking such a strong position.

TC: Do you think he was overplaying? If you try to put yourself back in your 1966 perceptions as opposed to how you saw it later, did you have any sense he was overplaying his hand? Maybe another way of saying it: Was he was just getting too wound up on this thing? His behavior became very intense at that point in the sense of, while on his trip he refused—that type thing. I know you don’t want to criticize him, but how do you think you felt at that time? How do you think you saw this going down?

GA: I think that at that time, I didn’t have a strong feeling either for or against. I understood because of the things that happened before. Tom Ebesu, my campaign manager, and I after the county [party] election in 1965—Tom and I went when Tom Gill was running against Tadao Beppu, and Tom won. Tom Ebesu and I went over to see Tom Gill to tell him that even though there was a very big split and fight for the election, I tell him, “You won. We’re prepared to help you. Work with you.”

His response to me was, “I won. I pick up the marbles.” I had that kind of [experience] with Bert Kobayashi and [others] trying to get him [Tom Gill] to support Governor

Burns. So, I understood how strongly the feelings were, and I understood also that there was some justification for that feeling.

Later on, when I ran for lieutenant governor, I talked to Governor Burns about having the party come together after the primary. We've got to get Tom Gill to come support us. He told me, "You go to talk to him." I went and I talked to him.

Tom told me, "No. You won and you're on your own." He was not going to at least come together to support us.

So I came back and I told Governor Burns that Tom refused to come together.

He said, "That's why I wanted you to go talk to him. I knew that was going to be the response."

TC: Let me push on. In this arc in which things are—some people could look at this and say, "Things really came easy to George. Things just seemed to kind of come to George." Right? Actually, it wasn't so easy, in terms of things like the ways and means, struggling with that, pioneering in ways. The Maryland bill. The '66 election that did set the scene for this much exaggerated, polarizing in the senate. Then the dispute between Nelson Doi and Yoshinaga, very well publicized, and you were offered presidency and you were offered virtually anything you wanted to tip the scales. You said, "No, we really have to come together." So when they finally did come together, you got very little. That was when I first got to know you.

GA: Yeah, I got the utilities committee.

TC: Yeah, you got the public utilities committee, (MK chuckles) which was not the. . . .

GA: It was almost nothing.

(Laughter)

MK: It wasn't ways and means.

TC: It was a come down. People say it's a real come down. People would say, "Well, Ariyoshi's not a real politician anyway." How did you feel during that period? It was kind of a crossing-the-desert—for some people it would be a kind of crossing-the-desert experience. How did you take that?

GA: I always felt in everything that I did that people had a right to do whatever they had to do, what they wanted to do, for whatever reasons that they did that. I acknowledged the fact that people have different reasons for doing things, even though I may not agree. In this particular case, they felt they were very much against Najo and wanted me to be on their side. The caucus started off with me being elected as caucus leader because I was not on either side. I accepted in the hopes that I could bring everybody together, but I couldn't. They offered me the presidency, that was it. I either accepted it or didn't. If I didn't, then they were going to go ahead and do it their way. So, I didn't have any strong feelings or get angry. I just felt that I had a responsibility to do what I can as a legislator. I was going to do that. That's what I did during that ensuing legislature.

In 1968, [David] McClung, who had been one of the leaders, came back to me, and he was going to become the president. Hulten, John Hulten, became the interim president during that period. McClung came to me and told me that they were all very concerned I was going to be a thorn in their side during that legislative session, but that I didn't and I tried to be helpful and I tried to do what I had to do to help the session get along. So David McClung told me that he is very grateful and all the others are very grateful and acknowledged the way in which I conducted myself during that period. I could have been very critical of some things, but I was not. So he told me, "You can have any position that you want. I'm going to be president. You can have ways and means. You can have majority leader. Floor leader. Any one of those positions. It's yours for the asking."

I told him, "No, I'm not going to ask you for anything. I will tell you that I will take anything that you folks want to offer me where I can be helpful."

He told me, "Well, the session is going to be very contentious, so we need somebody who can keep the session moving. I'd like you to take the floor leader's position."

So I did. I took that position, and my style was—normally floor leader gets up at everything. He's really very open, very visible. But I wasn't that visible. I went to each committee—each chairman came up to present their bill. I tell them, "You take the lead. I'll support you and I'll help you." So I let them make the motions to adopt and for them to be involved on the floor, instead of floor leader making all the motions. I think that session made a lot of people look very differently at me.

TC: These elections and this process is about power, influence, and charting careers—calculating careers. The calculation would be: Young George Ariyoshi gets elected and he plays very notable roles in early statehood, and then he becomes senate president, which is a very high-profile job. That would put you in a great position to run for statewide office, right? How was it that you could just turn that down? How did you make that decision?

GA: Because in 1970 I had served sixteen years, and my intention was to run for four more years—one more term. Round up twenty years of service. I felt that I had done my duty, and it's time for me to step down. So I had no further goals beyond being a senator.

MK: So you were planning to retire at the end of . . .

GA: That's right.

TC: So even in like 1967, organizing your thoughts, you never thought of higher office.

GA: No. I felt that I had served—you know my first love was my law practice and I wanted to go back and really work in my law practice.

MK: I have a question. I noticed that—like when you were floor leader, you made it a point to have the committee chairs introduce bills. They get the credit for it.

GA: But it was their bill. They worked on the bills in the committee. They were the ones bringing it up. So all I did was let them make the motion to adopt on the floor.

- MK: But there seems to be a certain generosity on your part when it comes to credit, as you speak about your different acts through your career. Where does that come from? You would think a politician—you're a politician, you're in government service. Most politicians want to be recognized for what they've done.
- GA: I think it comes back to my parents. My personal values about my father telling me that nobody achieves anything by himself or herself. Whenever something happens you need a lot of help. Don't try to boast about what you did. Don't take credit. Always acknowledge that so many people participated in everything that you did. He used the word *okagesama de*. I think that was part of me. I didn't have to think about whether or not I wanted credit. I always felt grateful to other people for what happened.
- MK: Then there's that flip side of Japanese culture where, okay, you do things cooperatively and you help one another, but there's also *sekinin*. There's responsibility. How does that fit in?
- GA: I think that the responsibility part, you want to have things happen. You want to do what is good and what's right as a political politician. I think when you get more people working with you, you can achieve the goals that you want.
- TC: We come to then the 1970 election. We've previously talked about how you invested a lot of time and energy in bringing together your young guys. Some of your longer-time associates were gone off into different directions. You were really focusing this young new law firm. Then, the whole idea of running for lieutenant governor descended on you. I think that is—maybe we should just go through a little bit of the specifics of who came to talk to you and what your responses were.
- GA: Bert Kobayashi [Jr.] was one of the young people that I put together. I'm terrible on names now.
- TC: Koshiba?
- GA: [James] Koshiba. And Bob Toyofuku. The young group that I started to put together. Jeff Watanabe began to start talking about that effort also. As Bert and Koshiba came to me and told me that it's okay for me to go, that they're going to be all right and they're going to manage.
- MK: Who first approached you though? Who first said, "How about running for lieutenant governor?"
- GA: Running for governor?
- MK: Lieutenant governor.
- GA: Lieutenant governor.
- MK: Yeah. Who first approached you?
- GA: I'm trying to think of all their names. (Pause)

TC: The ones I know of that I can think of were Eddie DeMello [ILWU lobbyist] . . .

GA: Yeah, Eddie DeMello.

TC: Nelson Prather [lobbyist for the sugar industry]. Then I just had a question, was Bert Sr. involved in that conversation?

GA: Yeah. I think Bert was there also.

MK: Then I think in here, you mentioned . . .

GA: This is Bert [Kobayashi] Sr.

MK: Bert Sr.

TC: Bert Sr.

GA: [Bert] Jr. was the one who came to my law firm.

TC: Bert Jr. was in the law firm, yeah.

MK: How about Jimmy Takushi? Was he?

GA: No, he was not part of that group that came.

TC: But you then quickly got over to talking with Governor Burns and that was the most meaningful aspect of this.

GA: Uh-huh. My response to them was, “How does the governor feel about this?”

“You think we’re going to be here without the governor knowing about this?” (WN laughs.)

WN: That’s right.

MK: Are we okay on time?

WN: We’ve got four minutes, so we should change tapes.

TC: Let’s go on. So then how was that conversation with him?

GA: With Governor Burns?

TC: Yeah, what happened to you? Because you were not eager to do this, so what went on with you?

GA: He wanted me to—we never really talked too much about lieutenant governor’s campaign and his governor’s campaign at that time. But he talked about wanting 1974 and he told me that was a concern of his. I thought, he just wanted somebody—the succession—to be following him. Then I told him, “You know Governor, my first love is

my law practice.” I told him about, and he knew, that I had made a decision when I was in eighth grade to become a lawyer, and how hard I worked towards that goal. He understood all of that.

He told me, “But if you care about your community—and you got to care about your community and you’ve demonstrated your care about your community—you cannot pass up this opportunity, this chance, what you have to do now.” He told me, “Please listen very carefully to what I’m going to say to you now.” His words were, “No person other than a white person has ever been governor of Hawai‘i. No person other than one born outside of Hawai‘i has ever been governor of Hawai‘i. Dare I say, I think an inferiority complex, a feeling that that has to continue to be so that no local person can become governor. You’ve got to run and you’ve got to break that.” He said, “You’ve got to be the lieutenant governor and you’ve got to run in ’74 so that you can become governor. If that happens, maybe there might be a Filipino or a Chinese or a Hawaiian who can become governor also.”

I thought about that. But that never become a reason for me to run. I felt it was important, but it was not the reason for me to make my decision to run for governor.

WN: Did you ever ask the question, “Why me? Why not someone else?”

GA: Yeah, that’s what I felt. I didn’t say that to him, but that’s what I thought.

WN: Did you have anybody in mind who could be the one running for lieutenant governor?

GA: No. (Laughs)

TC: You said that that wasn’t the reason that was your . . .

MK: Save it for the next tape. Yeah.

TC: Okay, I know exactly where I want to pick up though. We can have a little break here.

MK: Yeah. (Pause) How are you feeling?

GA: I’m okay.

MK: You’re okay?

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: Wait, now let’s identify it. This is a continuation of session eleven on September 19. Okay.

TC: Okay. So Governor Burns made this very interesting statement to you, very strong, historically rooted statement. You said you really thought about this, but you also added that wasn’t the reason. That wasn’t the thing that tipped the scales for you. Can you identify what tipped the scales for you?

GA: My desire to see Governor Burns reelected to his third term in 1970, and that was what made me really decide I wanted to take part in that election. I concentrated on his election. I didn't push myself that much, more speaking about Governor Burns and what kind of job he did, what kind of governor he was, and what kind of person he was. My desire to see him get reelected, that was what motivated me to get involved in 1970.

TC: I was there the night you made that very powerful speech kicking off your campaign. You spoke about his historic contribution and you addressed your children and the future of Hawai'i. You used those words publicly, *okagesama de*. What do you remember about that night?

GA: (Pause) Not very much. But I think more than anything else I was touched by the people who came together to express support. Not necessarily for me, but support for Governor Burns. (Pause) And my children being there. For the first time, I really got them so active and involved in my campaign. They became so very much involved in all my subsequent campaigns.

TC: Your parents were there?

GA: My parents were there, yeah.

MK: Before you made that speech, how much had you prepared or worked on it?

GA: On the speech? Not very much. (Pause) I never spend too much time on speeches because I say what I feel. For me to say something, I have to feel very strongly about what I'm saying. So, I never really had to think too much about what I wanted to say. I think it became very natural for me to say whatever had to be said.

WN: This is the era before term limits, right? There weren't any term limits for governor at that time, right?

GA: No.

WN: Okay, so Governor Burns and others approached you to run for lieutenant governor in 1970, thinking about the 1974 election. So, was it clear at that time that Burns was not going to run again?

GA: In '74?

WN: In '74.

GA: Yeah.

WN: How did he say that to you?

GA: By telling me that he wanted me to be ready. When he spoke to me like that, my initial reaction was, he wanted to be sure he gets succeeded by someone he likes or agrees with. But I didn't think about the impact I would make by getting elected when he talked about first—all white people being elected, all outsiders are being elected.

WN: So your decision to run for lieutenant governor in '70 was, in essence, saying that you're going to run for governor in '74.

GA: No.

WN: That didn't go through your mind? That thought?

GA: It went through my mind, but I was more concerned about the '70 election, about Governor Burns getting elected, because any thought about 1974 could not happen unless Governor Burns got elected in 1970. So I really worked hard for him. I campaigned for him.

We have a traditional rally on the Big Island on the eve of the election, and I was there and Governor Burns was there. We came back the following morning, and he gave me a ride home and I lived in Kawānanakoa Place at that time. We drive into the driveway and then the car stopped. He reached out to grab my hands, and he told me, "Thanks very much buddy." He said, "You're going to be okay. But I'm not sure I'm going to make it."

When he told me that, I really, really felt bad for him. I thought to myself, "This man had been going through all this campaign period doubting whether or not he was going to make it through the primary." I told him, "Governor, you haven't been out but I have. I've been out every day, every night meeting people. I know you're going to be okay today."

WN: He had already known that he had cancer?

GA: No.

WN: When he said, "I'm not going to make it," meaning what?

GA: He was not going to get reelected. He was going to lose in the primary.

WN: I see.

GA: And lose to Tom Gill. You've got to understand that one year before that, Jack Burns was behind by a two-to-one margin behind Tom Gill.

TC: He was way behind.

WN: Wow.

TC: I have to say my little autobiography. There's this aura of inevitability that had encompassed Tom that he was the future of the Democratic party. So I got—young guy and didn't really know anything. But I saw this, and I saw how popular he was in low-income communities because I had worked in the community action program. The night that I saw Mr. Ariyoshi deliver this speech was the night I thought (chuckles), "Maybe Tom Gill isn't going to be governor. Maybe he isn't the future of the Democratic party." It was a very interesting moment for me personally, because—I don't think you remember but I had become modestly acquainted with you while you were chairing the public utilities. (GA chuckles.) You had time to talk and it was very interesting and I

came by and talked to you a couple of times. Part of my trying to learn. I thought, “He’s much more interesting than I had read about.” Because all I knew about was like Nelson Doi and Yoshinaga. So I saw that night and I thought you changed the entire dynamic of the campaign. I think you did get him reelected. That’s my personal opinion. I think you set in motion a whole positive arc that culminated in his winning.

And so, he won the primary and the general was pretty much a foregone conclusion. He really took you in, in terms of actually governing, in different ways we talked about, like going to all the cabinet meetings. There were all sorts of outward things, spending long hours with him. Do you think that he was just tired of all the hard work he was doing, or do you think he had an intuition that maybe his health was failing? He was turning things over to you, and he was educating you to this office and to the burdens of this office, right? He was always going away.

GA: Yeah. I don’t think his health had anything to do with it, because I don’t think he realized at that point he had cancer. It was not until—that was 1970—not until 1972, around the latter part of 1972, when he came up to me and told me that he had a hole in his stomach.

I was like, “What?” He says a hole in his stomach. I say, “You’ve got to go see the doctor.”

He said, “Hmm,” and he kind of let it go.

But I think what had happened was, after that 1970 election, he was really intent in not only seeing me get elected, but he was intent on seeing that I did a good job as governor. So, training me and exposing me to the rigors of being governor was very important. So right after the election, he called me and he told me, “We have lunch today.” He wanted to take me to the YWCA [Young Women’s Christian Association] where his Lions [Club] group was meeting. He wanted to introduce me to his Lions friends.

Shortly after that, not on that same day, but a day or two after that he told me, “You and I have different backgrounds. You were born here, I was born in Montana. You’re Japanese, and I’m Caucasian. You went to school here, and I didn’t. So your values may be very different from mine.” He told me, “I just want you to understand that I’m very grateful for the [support] I got from you. But I want you to feel that you have a right to do what you want to do, what you have to do. Please don’t feel obligated that you have to come along with everything that I’m doing. You don’t have to think like me. You can’t think like me because you are a different person from me. I don’t want you to give up your own personal feelings and your own personal thoughts to be part of our team.”

I was very grateful to him at the moment for him telling me that, because I was toying with the idea, “Gee, now I’m part of the team. What do I have to do if I disagree with him? If I don’t feel the same way he does.”

He made it very clear to me, “You remain your own man. You make your own decisions and I will understand. In fact, I want you to be able to do that.”

For me, when he told me that, my assessment of him went up another notch. (Pause) It happened then—the first time that really came about was when the sugar plantations were

taking all the bagasse, the leftover sugarcane, bulldozing it into the ocean. Nice, easy way to get rid of that. The EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] came in and said you can't do that. You got to stop doing that.

The sugar plantations—Big Island—took the position that we're going to stop doing that and we're going to burn it and generate electricity now. But it's going to take seventeen months in order for us to go through that process.

Health department told them, no, you've got to do it sooner. They were told they got to do it in (six) months.

They told the health department they needed seventeen months to plan and to construct the thing. When it's finished, they were going to generate twenty-three megawatts of electricity. That's one-third of the electric power used on the island of Hawai'i. (The health department insisted on six months.)

Then they came to me and they told me that the seventeen-month period was the time they needed to get the plant and put it in place and burn and generate electricity. I thought it was a good thing they were going to do. From being a polluter, take that which polluted and generate electricity. One-third of the power on the Big Island.

So I went to see Governor Burns, and he told me, "How do you feel about that?"

I told him, "I think it's very reasonable. Not only reasonable, but a good position that they are taking, and I want to help them."

So he tells me, "That's what you believe? You go help them."

So I went out and I tried to help them. I told them, "I'm going to keep track of what you do. In the seventeen months, you've got to meet that seventeen-months deadline." They agreed they are going to do that. Then Tom Pico, who was in the attorney general (office) at that time, (assigned to) the health department, went public and said I had entered into a sweetheart deal with sugar.

Diane Dods—she was Diane Nose at that time—she was working for me. I was on the Wai'anae side. She called me and she said, "You got to come back quickly. (The EPA [Environmental Protection Agency]) are having this meeting and this is what's being said."

So I told Diane, "Ask them to wait, because I'm getting in a car and coming back right away." I came back and I met with EPA people and I told them that I acknowledged that what they were then doing was not good for Hawai'i. Dumping it (into the ocean). But I also wanted to acknowledge the fact that they were going to do something about it. Not only do something about it, but something good is going to come out of it. They're going to spend monies [to generate electricity]. And EPA went along with me. I told them, "I'm willing to accept responsibility for this. I will monitor to be sure that this happens within the seventeen-months period."

They said okay. They give that period. But then the carpenters union went on strike. So they couldn't meet that seventeen-months period. They came to me and said, "We were going to meet this thing but the carpenters union went on strike now. That's going to set us back."

I told them, "It's not your fault. I'm still very supportive of you. It's not your doing that we're going to delay the thing. As far as I'm concerned, I'm willing to give you a few extra months that you need because of this strike." They criticized me again for the delay and how the commitments were not made. But I took all of it. And, we got it completed and they generated enough power. Not only did we do that, but I met with. . . .

TC: Pico?

GA: No, no. I met with head of C. Brewer [& Co.]. (Pause)

TC: I know who you mean.

GA: (Pause) I did many things with him. He and I talked and we talked about what if you don't have enough bagasse to burn? He came back and he said, "Let's go plant eucalyptus trees," eucalyptus trees that grow a foot a month. In five years it'll be sixty feet tall, and every five years you can cut off fifty feet of that. The remaining ten-foot stump will regenerate.

TC: [John] "Doc" Buyers.

GA: Doc Buyers, yeah. We went out and we planted trees. Now, Doc Buyers and I got acquainted because one day I was giving a talk on our state financing and what I wanted to do. There was this bald-headed guy right in the front. He was so intent listening to me. A few days later I got a card, tells what my schedule is. Oh, Doc Buyers coming in. The door opened and this man walked in and I don't know who he was. He walked in, he sat down in front of me. He told me that he was very impressed with the things I was trying to do. He told me that he wanted to help me as much as possible.

I told him, "Yeah, Doc. There's something. I want your help." This was before all this bagasse thing came about.

Kaua'i. I tell him that [C.] Brewer [& Co.] had sold all the land at Kilauea for \$6 million. Now, the people who had bought the property are talking about reselling, subdividing and reselling for an aggregate price around \$28 million. Three or four times what they paid for the property. I said, "What's going to happen after that?" Another round, going to keep going up. The price is going to go up. All of it is going to be subdivided. To me, Kilauea is very important ag[ricultural] property. We've got to somehow save that.

He told me, "Let me think about that." He says he believes the same thing also. He was the one who came back to me and told me, "I am willing to put in a restrictive covenant running with the land. Any person who buys the property after that will have a covenant saying that they cannot use that land for other than agriculture unless the government decides they want to have different use other than agriculture." That's what he did for me

on Kilauea. So all the properties that was being sold by C. Brewer after that had that covenant.

JoAnn Yukimura, who was mayor [of Kaua'i] at that time, came to see me and she told me, "You're making it easy for people to sell the property."

I tell her, "Yeah, maybe I'm doing that. But you know what, JoAnn? The price is going to be restricted and everybody else who buys it in the future can only use it for agriculture. What we're going to do is save this land for ag use in the future." I had a hard time dealing with JoAnn, convincing her that was the thing we ought to do. She opposed our doing this from the very beginning.

TC: It's almost unimaginable today that that could have happened, Governor. In light of all the push to subdivide and all the push to drive land prices up, that a corporation would do that. It's just extraordinary.

GA: Doc Buyers invited me to come and he wanted me to plant a (guava) tree, and I did. I asked him, said many years after that, "Doc, how's that guava tree?"

He said, "It's still surviving." He was taking good care of it. I don't know what it is now, but when Doc Buyers was alive he indicated to me that happened.

TC: Let me ask a very general question. Sort of getting back to your life experience. Your life had revolved around law practice, family, and legislature. The legislature is—a lot of people sort of go through the arena of the legislature. When you changed to the executive branch, there's a different set of relationships and a different overview, big picture, but also new relationships. I wonder how you liked that, how you responded to it, how you saw it as being different.

GA: I was very understanding of the fact that without the help of the legislature, many things that I wanted to do could not be done. So I wanted to work together with the legislature. I wanted their help. I was willing to take some of the pressure that we talked about earlier. Take the pressure and be the bad guy in return for them really coming along and doing some things that I felt was very important. So working with the legislature, I had very good relations with them. I also understood the process and I did not want them to do anything that would embarrass them. I didn't want them to do something that would get them hurt because I asked them to do that. Anything that I sent to the legislature, I told them that I did not have the benefit of public hearings and they do. I told them, "Everything that I send to you now, you go through the public hearing process and you get people to come and respond and tell you whether it's good, what kind of changes that should be made, and act accordingly. If you feel that you cannot go along with the measures that I send down, that's okay with me." So I had that kind of relationship, understanding with the legislature. Henry Peters became speaker after Jim Wakatsuki, and I had very good relations with Jim Wakatsuki and with Henry Peters.

TC: In the four-year scenario where you were elected lieutenant governor, there was a point where Governor Burns told you that his health was threatened. Then there's sort of a kind of agonizing, dragged out process by which you really took over as chief executive. Could you talk about that? What was the hardest aspect of that?

GA: I think if I'm correct, I mentioned he got sick in 1972 yeah? I think in early '73, when he got ill—for me when he first told me that it was a very personal thing. I felt very bad that a person that I got to really like and admire and like to work with became sick like that. But, I felt that I had a responsibility to him, so that his sickness would not mean that his administration would become useless and worthless. I felt that I had that obligation to step in and do whatever I can to make his policies work out.

The one thing that created some problem for me was the policy he had about freezing all employees and not hiring any person (when a) position became vacant (unless it was) approved by him. So when I became acting governor, I had that process I had to go through. I followed the same process. Position becomes vacant, they came up to me and wanted to justify filling that position. I said okay. Then they went back and filled the position. Then come back and tell me who got in that position. When I started to do that, I thought to myself, "I don't know whether the position is needed. I can't go to the department to make the determination." Budget and finance person had to do that. So they were the ones actually making the (decision) instead of the (governor).

Shortly, right after that, I issued a statement saying that I was going to change that practice and I would no longer have to decide what positions continue to be vacant or get filled. Filling the position is the responsibility of the director and somebody told me, "Oh, you are being very generous in letting them do that."

I kiddingly told them, "No, I'm not doing that. I'm not letting them pass the buck to me."

TC: I ran into Hiram Kamaka, who was your friend and supporter at an earlier time. In essence, Hiram—I was shocked, but I don't think I ever told you this—Hiram voiced tremendous bitterness at you. We don't have to go into the personalities, but he was very bitter at you and there was also fallout with Dan Aoki [Democratic party organizer and key aide to John A. Burns]. I don't know what else, but some of the people who were most emotionally attached to Governor John A. Burns—what was going on from your point of view? You had to assume these powers of governorship, but there were key people who resented you.

GA: I knew Hiram [state budget director] was very bitter. As a matter of fact, they really delayed my becoming acting governor. They wanted to put that off as long as they possibly could. The constitution provides that you can be acting governor only for thirty days, and so I was acting governor for more than a thirty-day period. But I didn't say anything about it, and I let it go. I questioned whether or not there might be questions about the legality of what I did, if I was acting governor over a thirty-day period. But AG told me, it's okay and not a problem. So I let it go. But Hiram was one of those very much involved in wanting to see that deferred as much as possible. I understood that. The way I began to conduct the operation, he was going to lose the power. Budget and finance was firmly in control, almost everything that happened, they were the ones that recommend what positions get released. They were the ones—how much gets released. I felt the opposite. How could I know, one person? How could budget and finance person know what had to be done in every department? We pay a director a good sum of money for him or her to do the best job possible, and if I'm going to be the person telling him what they can do, including whether you fill a position or not, then he's going to almost give up on doing his job. He's going to say, "Why should I do this?" That's when I said

(you cannot) pass the buck to the governor. That's what was happening. It was Hiram Kamaka in-between making all the calls about positions that got vacant, what remained vacant, what got filled, and who filled those slots.

TC: There was this tremendous power that Hiram was exerting in that period that changed when you came in.

GA: Mm-hmm.

TC: Was it also emotional stuff, or do you think it was just issues of influence? Dan Aoki became very critical of you.

GA: You see, I don't know whether or not they understood Jack Burns's feeling about wanting me in 1974 to be there. Jack Burns got sick in '73, so during a good part of that pre-campaign period he was not active. There were times when I began to feel that the governor wants me to be there in '74, but I wasn't getting that kind of help from him. By him, I meant the people who were very close to him. So I began to wonder whether or not the governor really wanted me. But in the few times that I talked to him, I began to understand that the governor still feels very strongly about me getting involved in the '74 election. But I guess (pause) when you have power there's some reluctance to give up the power. And if things don't happen accordingly, you get very upset. That's how I sensed things that were beginning to happen around Burns's key people. They became very concerned that I was moving ahead without their dictating to me what I do and how things get done.

MK: To what extent did Governor Burns have control over, say, Dan Aoki or Mike Tokunaga or other people who were his guys?

GA: I think he began to lose that kind of control also, because he was no longer active. Mike Tokunaga was different. Mike was different from the others, and he kind of helped us to the extent he possibly could.

MK: So there were differences within the Burns group in their relationship to you?

GA: Yeah. I think they wanted to be more involved. They wanted to be more in control. I think that's what they saw, because that was my style, that I was not going to let anybody really control me or control the activities of government.

MK: How did you become aware of their feelings towards you?

GA: I don't think it happened at any one time. I think it was a gradual thing I began to feel, about the way they talked to me. They used some strong language to me sometimes. You know, for me that was a message I could understand their feelings. (Pause)

TC: How difficult was that to deal with?

GA: It was difficult, but I did not let it affect my decisions or what I wanted to do—what I had to do.

TC: In this period, you had other major things going on in your life. You led the mission to Japan, developing the Japan-Hawai'i Economic Council. In a way, you reconnected with Japan on a significant level. I don't know if you'd been to Japan—had you been to Japan since the war?

GA: I had been, on a personal basis. But not any business with the state.

TC: So you had an impression that Japan was thriving, but then you really connect on another level with something that went on—Japan-Hawai'i Economic Council was very crucial for a good long while. In the process, your father was in Japan and his health was . . .

GA: He died, yes.

TC: Could you talk about that? Tell Warren and Michi about that.

GA: Well, I had gone back to Japan in 1965 and I saw the economic growth that was taking place. I thought about America and the desire of the United States to see Japan make as rapid an economic recovery as possible after the war and [Douglas] MacArthur's mission in trying to do that. I began to understand. I remember that seven-year-old child who taught me the spirit, the will of the Japanese people and the desire to be of help to each other. In 1965 when I made that visit, I thought about all these things that had happened and how Japan had made such a strong economic recovery up to that point. Sony was just getting started also. I remember buying a Sony television to bring home at that particular time. I thought that Japan had made a great recovery. I was very grateful to the United States for the way in which they had conducted the affairs in Japan to provide for this kind of recovery.

I also acknowledged the important role that the people of Japan played in this recovery. Had it not been for the willingness of the Japanese to make the kind of sacrifice—*kuni no tame*—for country. All the efforts. They put in long hours working to make things work out. That and America's effort to try to help Japan, making Japan get such a strong recovery.

By the time I became lieutenant governor, I was very mindful of the important role that Japan was playing in terms of international economic activities. I felt it was important for Hawai'i to be tied as close as possible to many things that were happening in Asia and in Japan, in order that we could benefit economically. So when I took the trip in 1970, 1971, and Governor Burns asked me to lead that mission, I felt that I could be very helpful in this effort to have Hawai'i take advantage of the gains that were being made in Japan. I felt very strongly that we couldn't do it without the help of the Japanese businesses. As a result of that mission, we started to talk about a more formal relationship. The Japan-Hawai'i Economic Council became a result of that discussion.

MK: And you went on a trip to Japan?

GA: Yes. I was very grateful that we had that kind of leadership on the Japanese side. It was not just small-business people, but at that time big business was getting very much involved, wanting to support this relationship and support Hawai'i. It got to the point where the Japanese side was saying, "We don't want bad people to come and do business

- with Hawai'i. We want to help in that process and we will be very careful to see who is getting involved in what kind of business in Hawai'i with Japan, so that we will help try to keep out bad relationships from coming to pass."
- TC: I remember I made an analysis at one point of the people on the Japan side who participated. It was as if many of the top economic powers of Japan were there with the top economic powers of the state of Hawai'i, not the United States. That to me said fostering a very special relationship.
- GA: We had the top business organizations. We had Mitsubishi, Mitsui. We had the Bank of Tokyo. Fujitsu. Really big business leaders. Japan Airlines. The tourism people, top tourism officials. They got all involved on the Japan side.
- TC: How did you experience this big step? That must have been very, intensely interesting, but also sort of thrilling, I would think, to be able to help nurture that and facilitate that.
- GA: Japan is the country of relationships. It was then and still is, although people begin to minimize that importance. But I think that my personally being there played a very important role in helping to facilitate the activities between Hawai'i and Japan. We even talked about wanting to keep out the bad people from getting involved in business in Hawai'i. That they will do everything they can to watch the kind of business that gets involved. They were saying to me that they want to be sure that we get protected. Not only do businesses get started, but that we get started in the right kind of way with the right people. That we get protected from people who might want to take advantage of Hawai'i.
- MK: What I find interesting is that Hawai'i becomes very important. It's a Japan-Hawai'i relationship and not necessarily a nation-to-nation relationship. You're taking a lead in that.
- GA: But I think that's what becomes very important. It's not the top leaders coming together to make things happen. So often it's at the lower level you've got to make things happen. For example, I feel very strongly about today, Japan and India becoming closer together. Two democratic nations coming together and trying to do many things together. The United States are being there together also. But I've always told the Japanese people, you do that as government-to-government but it's not going to work unless you have people coming together, businesses coming together. That's what I think Hawai'i tried to do when we got involved with Japan.
- MK: This will kind of go a little bit backwards, but I was wondering, when Governor Burns approached you to run for lieutenant governor, that was the first time a Japanese American might really become lieutenant governor. Did you and other people think Hawai'i was ready to have a Japanese American governor? A lieutenant governor?
- GA: Well, I didn't have to think that. The people made that decision.
- MK: No one counseled you? "Na, na, na, don't do it!" (Chuckles) No one counseled you in that way?

GA: There was a concern, and that concern was expressed to me by Jack Burns. He used the word, banana. He asked me, “You know what a banana is?”

I tell him, “Yeah, it’s a fruit.”

“What color?”

“Yellow.”

“What about inside?”

I had to think about that. Creamy. “It’s white isn’t it?” I tell him, “I guess more white.”

He said, “I don’t want you to become a banana.” He was telling me that it’s very easy for me to step in and become so concerned about what people might think about me because I’m Japanese American, forget that I’m yellow and decide to become accommodating with the white.

WN: At the same time, Vince Yano was running in that same race, who was Japanese American. I was wondering, did ethnicity or race come into that at all in that campaign? In essence, Japanese against Japanese.

GA: No. No. I never felt I had to say or do anything with Vince Yano. I just left him alone. He was supported by Nelson Doi’s group, and I just felt that I wanted to concentrate more on Jack Burns and getting him elected. So, that part didn’t come about too much because I wasn’t too worried about my own race.

TC: Vincent, as I recall the story, was from like your old neighborhood when you were a child wasn’t he? Did you tell us that Vincent and you grew up within the same couple of blocks or something?

GA: Pālama.

TC: Yeah.

GA: Uh-huh.

TC: Interesting.

GA: My parents had an *udon* shop. Batten-ya. Vince’s family had a tailor shop, which was maybe five or six shops down away from ours.

TC: I wish I had known that as a reporter at the time. That would have been a good story.

(Laughter)

WN: Did you consider Vince Yano to be your chief rival? Or was Charles Campbell?

GA: I didn’t even think about that.

WN: Do you know the results of that or how close was it?

TC: Yeah, it was like Mr. Ariyoshi sort of won running away. Vincent got some significant chunk of votes, and Campbell was quite a way back.

GA: Vince Yano and I had been involved in some business transaction.

TC: This is an interesting—while there are so many interesting subjects we're talking about here, but I want to go back to Japan briefly and then I have something about Vincent that I'm curious about.

The response that you got in Japan said to me—what I thought didn't matter but, Governor Burns had been there I think the year before, like 1969, 1970 in the ramp-up to the exposition. I think it was Osaka. It was sort of a big coming-out exposition. Hawai'i had invested in that, Osaka. Governor Burns actually went. I think it was his only time in Japan. I think he was very warmly received.

GA: Yes.

TC: Then you went. Your reception—I think we could say objectively without trying to embarrass you in any way—your reception far exceeded expectation, and far exceeded what we in Hawai'i really could see or understand. It said something about—what do you think it said, but it obviously said something about Japan's longstanding concern for how persons of Japanese ancestry were treated in this predominant white nation. Other Asian nations then exhibited that as well. Ben Cayetano's popularity in the Philippines was another example of that. What did you get out of it? What do you think it said in the overall—this tremendously strong reception you got, Governor?

GA: I think it was pride amongst the Japanese in Japan, that a person whose parents came from Japan could achieve such a high office that had never been achieved by anybody. So I think it's kind of their own personal pride that they saw through me. So much so that at one point somebody told me—there was some polls taken about popularity. They told me that if I had run for office in Japan I would have gotten elected.

(Laughter)

TC: You were widely publicized. It had become widely known. It was sort of like a celebrity thing.

GA: Even so much so that today, a lot of the people—my contemporaries who knew me then personally—many of them are gone. So, they don't know me personally. They don't even know what I look like. When I went to Fukuoka for Hawaiian Airlines' inaugural flight, we had a banquet that night. I went to the banquet and a few people knew me, came up to me, and talked to me. But, after the program started and after they found out that I was there, I had so many people who didn't know me looking for me and coming up to me and wanting to get *meishi*, give me cards so they could get my card too. They would bring food for me, you know? (MK chuckles.) Everybody would get all kinds of foods and want to bring it. It meant to me that the younger generation didn't know who I was, that I was George Ariyoshi, but they knew about George Ariyoshi. As a result, when they

- heard that I was there, they all wanted to come and meet me. I think it indicates that the Japanese had great pride in who I was and had not forgotten even though they did not know that I was that person.
- MK: I'm just curious, you were saying there was a lot of media coverage of the governor in Japan. In the Japanese press, did they refer to you as *Nikkeijin* or *Nihonjin*?
- GA: *Nikkeijin*.
- MK: *Nikkeijin*, someone of Japanese descent.
- GA: In fact, when you mentioned the press, before the Hawaiian Airlines people were trying to get some press coverage and they wanted to use me to have press conferences. They couldn't get anything set up. They told me that they were trying to set up a press conference around a certain time and they couldn't get any response. I had a meeting set up with the governor, so when I went to the governor, all the press were there. Everybody understood they couldn't get the press conference because they were all coming to meet with the governor.
- TC: Could you explain that distinction you were drawing? *Nihonjin* versus *Nikkeijin*?
- MK: I was just curious because recently a Japanese scholar had been here to do a presentation on the history of Pearl Harbor. When we were talking, he was telling me about how popular Japanese American individuals were in Japan. He talked about Dan Inouye, he talked about yourself. At one point he mentioned, funny though, when Daniel Inouye became a senator, the press referred to him as *Nihonjin*. I was just curious. What is the Japanese press view of someone like yourself? Are you just a person of Japanese descent? Are you Japanese? Or did they refer to you as *Amerikajin*? I was just wondering in terms of identity, how do they identify you?
- GA: I think they looked at me as an American, but an American whose parents have roots in Japan. That because my roots are in Japan, they felt very proud that a person who is a descendant of a person from Japan could achieve the status that was achieved by me. So, I don't think they were trying to take credit that I was *Nihonjin*—Japanese—but they understood that I was Japanese American. That I was able to be successful, achieve this in America.
- TC: What about the perception of Hawai'i? That you were special because you were from Hawai'i, as opposed to if you had been from New Jersey or something like that? How much did the Hawai'i come into play?
- GA: I think the fact that they were willing to start the Japan-Hawai'i Economic Council and for the kind of people to come together and try to help. You see, that council was started not because Japan side wanted help. The council started because they felt that they could help Hawai'i. Help Hawai'i by increasing the economic activity. Help Hawai'i by not letting bad people come in to participate.
- TC: Right. One more minute? Okay. We've kept you a long time Governor, for somebody with your four broken ribs. . . .

(Laughter)

We've been cranking away. It is a little after 12:00.

MK: Let's stop here.

TC: Is this a good time to break?

MK: Yeah.

TC: We're going to go—next week we're going to go at it again? A week from today. Michi, how are we doing on progress you think?

MK: We're good. He [WN] makes me kind of watch. What part of the governor's life are we in?

(Laughter)

WN: The next session will be as governor. We've pretty much done with acting governor and lieutenant governor.

MK: Maybe picking up a few strands, but otherwise going to governor. So, think about your governor's time, next session.

WN: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-21-12-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

September 26, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

MK: This is an interview with Governor Ariyoshi on September 26, in Honolulu, O'ahu. The interviewers are Tom Coffman, Warren Nishimoto, and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

WN: Session number?

MK: Session number twelve.

GA: Twelve? (MK chuckles.)

TC: We had gotten you elected lieutenant governor. You had made a really big change in your whole life path and also your life style. One of the things that we didn't talk about, which actually I've really enjoyed talking with you about over the years, are the things that you have done to maintain your health. At your age, you are flying around the world and, however painful, you're coping with injuries, little setbacks; you make comebacks et cetera. When you got elected to the legislature you're surrounded by a life style where there's a lot of drinking and a lot of going to bars et cetera. "Let's go have a drink; let's go talk about this." Maybe we could just pick up there. I want to go back a little bit. Then talk about in 1970 you're an executive. I think as a health matter, being in the executive branches, it really does pose an issue that most people don't know about. I wonder if we could just start with the legislative thing, though. What did you do for exercise? How did you make these decisions?

GA: I've always tried to stay healthy, eat the right foods, not drink, because I think that's all part of my desire to stay healthy and spend time with my family and grandchildren. So I've been used to exercising. I don't go down to the gym or do anything like that but at home I do sit-ups and push-ups and leg exercises, stretching. I felt that that's one way for me to eat the right foods and do the right things for my body.

TC: How about this legislator life style? What went into deciding how you proceeded with that?

GA: Well, when I got elected we had lots of parties, people inviting us to deal at parties. We went to a lot of those, but I was okay because I wasn't drinking. I think my not drinking is a continuation of what I did when I was in the [military] service. We'd go out, group of

- us would go out, and I'd end up having to bring them all back to camp. Knowing that, I had to be sober in order to do that. So, I was one person who did not drink even when I was in the service.
- TC: When you became lieutenant governor, what was different? What kind of challenges did you face in terms of appropriation of time, life style, family, that type of thing?
- GA: I think a great deal of change in terms of the amount of time that I had to spend at government service. For me, that time that I spent was time that I wanted to make very meaningful. My law practice was my first love. When I was in my eighth-grade year what I wanted to become was a lawyer. So when I became a lawyer, it was for me a life-long dream fulfilled and I was very pleased that I could do that. Politics became a distraction. I got involved in it and, at that time, it was a sixty-day legislative session every year. The rest of the time, I'd go back and maintain my law practice. So it was not too bad. When I became lieutenant governor it became full time. I had to terminate my legal relationship so it was very, very different. At the same time I did that, I wanted to be sure that I didn't curtail my opportunity to be a father and have time with my children.
- TC: You then were approaching fifty years old. You, I think, were forty-eight or so when you were elected lieutenant governor.
- GA: Forty-four.
- TC: Forty-four. Okay. You were forty-four. So at forty-four, that's kind of a point where people can no longer take their good conditioning for granted. A lot of people start getting really out of condition, or sometimes they injure themselves by thinking they're twenty-four and go skiing all day or something like that. Do you remember what your exercise regime was at that point? Or some examples of it?
- GA: Lots of push-ups, lots of sit-ups, light weights, and some isometric exercises, and a lot of stretching. To me stretching is very important. I did it half hour in the morning and half hour in the evening before I went to bed.
- TC: Where did you learn the stretching? Did you ever take a yoga class or anything like that?
- GA: No. I just looked at what muscles I had to use. I was not trying to build up muscles. I wanted to stay in condition, muscle condition, so I used light weights and isometrics and stretching and act on my own personal body weight to do push-ups and sit-ups.
- TC: How many push-ups? (WN chuckles.) Because it's a lot, okay.
- GA: I used to do fifty push-ups every morning and fifty push-ups every night, at least, minimum.
- TC: It's not—other people's idea of push-ups. (Chuckles) It's not five.
- GA: See, at Washington Place, it took a while, upstairs, for the hot water to get hot so I could shave. So I turned the hot water pipe on, then I'd get down and do push-ups. I could do thirty push-ups before the water got hot.

(Laughter)

So when I did thirty push-ups, I knew that the water was ready for me.

TC: What is your exercise regime in this period of your life, in your eighties?

GA: The same thing. I do stretching, I do sit-ups. The only thing I don't do as much is push-ups.

TC: Do you still work with weights?

GA: Yeah, I work with weights, isometrics, stretching.

TC: You are a real inspiration, not only in politics but in health. Do you have advice for young people about health?

GA: My grandson tells me, "Grandpa eats a lot of salad." And I do. (Chuckles) Eat the right food and don't abuse your body.

MK: What did you do for recreational exercise? You hear a lot about people doing golf or tennis, how about yourself?

GA: I used to be very active in golf. I used to golf regularly until I fell and hurt my hand. I had three surgeries on my hand, on my wrist, and it still hurts so I don't play golf anymore.

MK: I've been curious. You didn't drink and yet a lot of discussions, I assume, took place over drinks or while golfing or other social activities. How were you able to have these discussions while not partaking in, say, drinking or doing other things that maybe other government people did?

GA: A lot of people go to bars to drink. I never did that. When I went to a party and they served drinks, it was not difficult for me to stay away from the drinks. I tried to make time with my family. That's why I almost never went to bars for drinking. People never invited me to bars to drink because they knew that that was not what I wanted to do.

MK: You mentioned the importance of having time for your family. In those days, what kinds of things did you do with your family? You know, during your senate days and your lieutenant governor days.

GA: When I became governor, my secretary had an instruction that whenever any of my children came to the office that she was to notify me. I would finish whatever I was doing and I would take time to see my children. I suspected that they were testing to see whether or not they had access to me. They found that whenever they had to see me, they could come in to see me and I would make time for them. To me it was very important because as busy as I was, they had to know that they were still part of my schedule and that part of my concern was for them also.

MK: Then as lieutenant governor, if you had to figure out how many family dinners you would have per week, what was it like then?

GA: Almost every weekend we had not only my own children but I had a lot of my brothers, my sisters, their family. And we still do.

TC: Was that at your house?

GA: Yes. We used to go down to the beach a lot. I think that during the summer, before I became lieutenant governor, we used to go down to the beach almost three or four times a week.

TC: Where did you go?

GA: Waikīkī, where I could park on Kalākaua Avenue. I'd go to Kūhiō Beach right there.

(Laughter)

TC: Were you ever a hiker? Did you ever go up in the mountains?

GA: I've gone hiking but I'm not a sustained hiker.

TC: In this period, your father and mother were both still with you. They would come to the weekend dinners as well?

GA: My parents lived with us.

TC: Your parents lived with you, right. So this is oldest son, culturally.

GA: Yes. I was lucky; Jeanie accepted that. Jeanie was very good to my parents. And if it were not for her, it would have been very difficult to maintain three generations under one roof.

TC: Your father, you had helped him become a legal resident as a result of the 1952 legislation. Thereafter, he had been able to travel out of the country. What do you think the meaning of that was for him and perhaps for your family as well, that he could go back and forth from Japan to Hawai'i?

GA: He still had family, brothers and sisters. My mother had aunts and relatives in Kumamoto [prefecture]. So it was very nice for them to go and meet their relatives and spend time with them and go to *onsen*. They worked hard during that time so I looked forward to their being able to travel to Japan and to be able to meet with their relatives and to go to *onsen* and relax.

TC: Did he go to sumo events in Japan?

GA: Not very much because most of the time he went during the summer and the summer months. The Fukuoka *basho* was in November. So they didn't have sumo in Kumamoto, Kyushu at that time.

TC: In your reconnecting with Japan after, particularly 1965 and after 1970, 1971, part of it was your connection to Hawai'i's participation in sumo though with Jessie Kuhaulua.

GA: Part of it. That was not a big part of my connection to Japan. I tried to help the sumo group when they came to Hawai'i. They had the sumo tournament here in Hawai'i. I tried to provide some help to them.

When I went to Japan, the one time I really got involved with them was the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war. The Japan Sumo Association wanted to go to Iwo Jima to commemorate the end of the war. At that time they asked me if I would go with them. At that time, Ambassador [Mike] Mansfield was the ambassador and I talked to him about it and he told me, "You go and you make some remarks and you represent me and represent the United States at that function."

TC: How was your relationship with Ambassador Mansfield? And how did that evolve?

GA: We got to be very close. I felt very strongly about the work that he was doing and the part that he played, not just with Japan-U.S. friendship [but] in many non-governmental ways. Every time I went to Japan—and I used to go to Japan quite frequently after I left the office and he was still ambassador—I would always get together with him. He would have me over for dinner, lunch over at the office. Whenever he traveled and he came to Hawai'i he always stopped by to see me. We were very close. As a matter of fact, when I wrote that book *With Obligation to All*, Mansfield, he read the manuscript and he had comments about the book.

WN: I always wondered, how was Mike Mansfield's Japanese?

GA: I never spoke to him in Japanese. I don't think he tried to.

WN: When he went to Japan—you never heard him speak Japanese. I just wondered, isn't he from Montana?

GA: Yeah, Montana.

WN: He was ambassador for a long time to Japan [1977–1988]. I'm just wondering how . . . Or did he speak Japanese at all?

GA: No he never spoke Japanese.

WN: Is that right?

GA: I think one of the reasons may be because he was so much involved in official business. I felt that there was a danger [speaking Japanese]; in formal transactions for a person who was not really good at the language to try to speak in Japanese, misinterpretation becomes very [real], yeah. I think that was maybe one of the reasons also he must have felt that he had to be careful about speaking Japanese. He never spoke Japanese to me.

WN: Not at informal parties or anything like that?

GA: No. But he was quite a person, very committed to America but very committed to Japan also. He believed the future of America depended so much on the relationship between Japan and America. That's something he felt very, very strongly about. That's what made

people trust him. He was trusted by the Japanese people and whatever he said, it carried a lot of weight in Japan.

WN: Was there any connection between Jack Burns and Mike Mansfield in terms of both being from Montana or was there any kind of connection there?

GA: I don't think there was. I'm not aware of that connection. They must have had because he was also Senate majority leader too at one point. They must have had some connections but I don't think there was a close personal relationship that existed between Jack Burns and Mansfield that was there between Jack Burns and. . . .

WN: Lyndon Johnson.

GA: Johnson.

MK: Going back to your father's trips to Japan, would you be willing to speak about your father's last trip to Japan? That occurred during your lieutenant governorship.

GA: Yes. Before my father left, we talked about that election in 1970. In 1971, before he left, he told me, "Next step is the governorship." That was in early March that he left. He left because—normally they used to go when it got warmer in June, but his brother's *kanreki*, sixtieth birthday, was in March. The brother asked him to come, so he decided he would go. It was too cold a time for him to go. When he went to Japan, he caught a cold and couldn't get over it.

I was told that there are two things you've got to be very careful about when you get older. One is catching a cold, and be careful of falling down. That catching cold part, most think cold is nothing, they don't really take care of it, you're going to get over it. But when you get older, catching a cold can lead to other more serious types of illnesses, like pneumonia. That's what happened to my father. He caught a cold and he just couldn't shake it. He had the cold for about thirty days. Finally he went to the hospital [Kumamoto University Hospital] and when he went to the hospital, it was pneumonia and it was too late for them to do anything to save him.

MK: At that point, where were you?

GA: I was here in Hawai'i. My mother called me to tell me that Papa was in bad shape, so I went up right away. When I got there, the doctor told me, "It's too bad you came all the way from Hawai'i but you ought to know that your father is not responsive to anything. So you may not get a response from your father."

Having told me that, I went in, I went to my father and I bent over. I said, "Papa, can you hear me?"

And he said, (whispers) "Yes."

The doctor was shocked. And his bent arms came around and pulled me towards him. The doctor told me if he had not seen that, he would not have believed that my father had that kind of strength. So he told me, "You must have been very, very close to your father. That gave him the strength to do what he did."

MK: It's almost like he was waiting for you.

GA: I was not there when my father died. At that time, Jack Burns had asked me to lead a group [a trade mission] to Japan that ultimately ended up becoming the Japan-Hawai'i Economic Council. I was in Tokyo and after a few days—I met my parents there in Kumamoto. I told my mother about this group and I was supposed to lead that group. She told me that I had to go. I said, "No I can't with Papa in this condition. I have to be here."

She told me, "No, you have to go because Papa understands your duties now and what you have to do. If he felt that you couldn't discharge your obligations because of him, he's going to feel really bad. This is something that's important. It's a group that you are going to lead through Japan and you must do that. You've got to leave."

I told my mother, "I'm not going to go."

She said, "You're going."

I said, "No, I'm not."

She said, "You're going." She won (chuckles). So I went to Tokyo. I went to the airport and the group landed. I went from there with them. But a few days later, my mother called me to tell me that he was really bad. So I told her that I was going to come. She said, "You don't have to. You can stay."

I told her, "No, I'm coming." I left the group with the idea that I would catch up again. When I got to Kumamoto, one of my mother's brothers met me and he told me—when I looked at his face, I knew what had happened. He told me I was not there in time. He told my mother later on. So I never want to be the person to give that kind of message to someone. I had to arrange to get my father's body back.

I was—'74, I missed my father in his not being around. It was my first campaign that my father was not going to be around with me. My mother kept on telling me, "Don't worry he's with you. Papa felt that this was the next step. Papa felt that you are going to become governor next time."

MK: When you were saying that you folks had a conversation where your father said the governorship is the next step, how early did you folks have any discussions of that sort?

GA: Very shortly after the lieutenant governor race. My father knew about the conversation I had with Burns and about Jack Burns telling me I had to go and succeed in that '74 election for other locals in Hawai'i. So my father knew about that also.

MK: I'm wondering, what concerns, if any, did your mother or father have about you as a Japanese American going for that kind of office?

GA: My father and mother knew that my law practice was my first love. They knew that for me it was a sacrifice to give that up. But, they also felt that each of us has a responsibility; we have a role to play. Things that I had to do, I have to do. So they understood the [role] that Jack Burns had given to me and they agreed that I cannot just think of my own self, what I wanted to do. It made me feel that I didn't have to stay in

- politics. Whenever I think that way—I always feel that I can take action and I have something to come back to, which is my first love anyway. So I don't have to do what I don't want to do. It was not politics for me, it was important that I did the right things while I was there.
- MK: So in speaking with your parents, they stressed the larger responsibility to the community rather than your own love of law.
- GA: I think not so much the large responsibility to the community, but more in line with Jack Burns telling me that I had to run so I can open up opportunities for other people in the future. I think that's what they understood and they agreed. So I'm doing it not only for myself, but I'm doing it because this will open up opportunities for other people.
- TC: Do you think that they shared Burns's sense that there was this ceiling on Japanese American participation that needed to be broken?
- GA: No. They understood what Jack Burns was telling me and they thought maybe that's what I have to do. It was not because they had very strong feelings that this was a barrier that exists and I have to tear it down.
- TC: They didn't have that sense of a barrier?
- GA: No.
- TC: But they sort of shared his sense that you needed to do this for future generations.
- GA: That's what Jack Burns was telling me. My parents agreed; they could see that, understand that so that's what they were telling me.
- TC: Way back when, Jack Burns had said to you, "No I don't need to use any of your campaign resources except for one, and that's your father." Did he have a conversation or a relationship with Ryozi Ariyoshi in that period after the lieutenant governor campaign and so on? There was a famous picture of Governor Burns, yourself, Jean, your mother, your father on election night. I know you were together on election night. Do you know if they had some communication? How did that go?
- GA: I don't know whether there was any communication because my father couldn't talk in the language. But Jack Burns saw how my father moved about. My dad was kind of an unusual person. He didn't speak English yet when he started the laundry business, he could go out and pick up so many customers. I watched him one time and he parked the car and started to go to houses. He was good to the children. All the kids would yell, "Mom, the laundry man! The laundry man!" So they kind of paved the way for my father to go and talk to them about whether or not there was any dry cleaning to pick up. It was amazing how he was able to go and get customers without being able to speak too much of the language.
- MK: He had a certain facility with people.
- TC: I remember your father; I saw him a few times. I thought he was a very extraordinary looking person. He had a great big smile, first of all. He had a kind of physical charisma.

There was something magnetic about him, I remember, as if people would be attracted to him.

GA: Yeah. You know one time I really hurt my father. During that lieutenant governor campaign, I was concerned about him getting overworked, him over-campaigning, because he really campaigned hard. So, I told him one day, "Papa, take it easy. You don't have to go campaigning. That's okay, there's lot of other people." I think I really hurt him when I told him that. I quickly realized that he was not happy not being out fully campaigning. So I quickly told him, "Papa, okay, you go out and campaign." I don't know if you remember another *sumōtori*, Chapulin. He was one of the top sumo wrestlers here in Hawaii at one time.

WN: What was his name?

GA: We call him Chapulin.

WN: That was his real name?

GA: No. Not sumo name. I forgot what his sumo name was.

WN: Was he Japanese or was he Hawaiian?

GA: Japanese. He was really comical. I remember during that election, he and my father would go out campaigning every day, take out brochures and things like that. And Chapulin always had a big hat (chuckles). He was Japanese but he could pass for a non-Japanese, too. He was one of the really popular Japanese wrestlers during that time. Very strong. He was very close to my father. All the campaigns he came out, my father worked with him.

MK: His name was Chapulin? Is it a take-off on Chaplin?

GA: I don't know.

MK: So he was comical (laughs).

GA: We used to call him Chapulin, Chapulin, you know.

TC: When you said they would go out, they would take brochures to a neighborhood every day?

GA: Yeah, go out canvassing every day. Downtown or wherever they decided they would go.

TC: Wow. That's really hard work after the first hour.

GA: Yeah, and that's what concerned me. I didn't want him to get hurt. I didn't want him to overdo, be carried away. So when I told him that he didn't have to go out and campaign like that, I knew that he was hurt.

- MK: In the photos that I've seen of your father, as Tom has said, there is a certain presence to him. I guess the Japanese word would be *kanroku*. There's some sort of dignity or something. There is a presence about him.
- GA: Yeah. When I think back, my father went to every coffee hour, every rally, every political appearance that I made here on O'ahu in Honolulu. From the time I ran, he was running a business too. We had rallies in those days, in 1954, and my father always showed up at the rallies before they got started. He would be working until then and he would show up for the rallies. My father, I think he passed the business [R & M Kalihi Dry Cleaner] on to another person in 1960. So until 1960 he has a business. In 1960, every political rally and place that I went, my father came with me.
- MK: I was wondering, when there were negative commentaries on your performances as a senator or as lieutenant governor, how did your father and mother, and even the rest of the family, take to these negative comments?
- GA: The person who really got hurt the most was my son, my oldest son, Ryoza. He was the one who felt that everything that's being said is not justified. He felt really hurt. My parents accepted whatever was said, they understood. They never wanted to make a big issue out of it. They left everything up to me. But my father and my mother and my family and even Ryoza, they understood what Jack Burns had said to me, many times, "If somebody says something bad about you, the best way to have them repeat it is to answer back. But if you don't do anything, you don't answer, it stops right there."
- In the case of Frank Fasi, when he used to attack me, Jack Burns told me, "You answer him, he's going to come back the next day to come after you again. But if you don't say anything it stops right there." So my family understood that also.
- MK: How did Mrs. Ariyoshi handle things like this?
- GA: Pretty good. I think she handled it the same way I did. She didn't like it. She felt it was unfair but she left it up to me.
- MK: There were controversial times, like the Maryland Land Bill. I guess I've read somewhere there were actually personal threats made against you. How did you deal with things like that?
- GA: You know, they used to call home [during decision-making on the Maryland Land Bill] and talk to Jeanie. They used to swear at her, yell at her. One day when I came back, she was on the telephone and I looked at her and I knew it was one of those calls. I took the telephone away from her. I listened to the call. The person was swearing and yelling and cussing me. I told him, "Hey, you're not talking to my wife now, you're talking to me. That's what you should do, talk to me. My wife did not vote. She's not in the legislature. It's terrible for you to make a telephone call at home and talk to her the way you talk to her. I don't think that's the right thing for you to do." I told that person, "You must hate my guts. You want to beat me up? Why don't you come over to the house, I'll meet you outside." He didn't say anything. I told him, "What, you can't respond to me now?" So I just told him, "You're not worth talking to." And I slammed the telephone on him. Because of that, when I went to the legislature, I had to call my friends to come over and

spend time at the house and answer telephone calls. One night they told me they had twenty-seven telephone calls.

MK: That was for the Maryland Land Bill. When you became lieutenant governor, were there any instances of that sort of thing happening?

GA: No. I was out campaigning one night [October 23, 1970] with Governor Burns and we came back to Washington Place and a note was sent to him. He took the note and opened the door and went in. As soon as he walked in, and without turning around he told me Larry Kuriyama [state senator] got killed. He told me, "Find Larry Mehau for me."

So I contacted Larry, "Larry come over quickly." This was around twelve o'clock.

So he came over and Jack Burns talked to him about what had happened. He said, "Go sniff around. Go find out what you can pick up on this matter."

After that, when I was on the Big Island, Jeanie received a telephone call from somebody threatening me, my life was in danger. They were going to get me. Jeanie was very concerned and she called Mrs. Burns. And Mrs. Burns told Jack Burns about it. Jack Burns made contact with me when I was on the Big Island and he told me to come home, come back right away. Then he told me, "Your family is all at Washington Place now."

I said, "My father and mother, too?"

He said, "Yes." My father and mother were at Washington Place. "They're staying here, so don't worry about them." When he told me that, I decided I'd finish up the work that I had to do to campaign on the Big Island. I came home that evening. My father was over there and he stayed over that night. Jack Burns wanted them to stay at the house, not go home right away. So they spent a couple of days, a couple of nights.

Doris [Murakami], who was the cook, asked my father, "What do you eat for breakfast?"

My father told her, "I have miso *shiru* every morning." So that's what she made for him. Because of that, I think, when I became governor, she had miso soup for me every morning. She had other things but she always had miso soup for me every morning.

MK: I'm wondering, what was the issue that would cause a threat?

GA: I don't know. Threats are funny. Sometimes it's because something happened and sometimes it's nothing personal. But the best way to bring it to a head, thus stop it, is not to talk about it. The more you talk about it, you say that to the press and they write it up, that's going to prompt other people to follow through. It's funny how those people react. Once somebody does that they're going to do the same thing.

For me the most serious threat that I had, and I did not know about it at that time, was a person who killed—was it Lennon? The rock singer.

WN: Oh, John Lennon.

GA: The Beatles. John Lennon, yeah. The person [Mark David Chapman] who shot and killed him was in prison and he was interviewed in prison later on. He made the statement that there were two other people he wanted to get, was on his list. One was Elizabeth Taylor. And George Ariyoshi. He was in Hawai'i at that particular time. He was married, I think, to a Hawai'i resident. The reason why he couldn't do anything with me was because of the security around me.

WN: You were governor at that time.

TC: That's an amazing story.

There was—Larry's death was tremendously shocking. You had served with Larry [Kuriyama]; you had known him for a long time. What was your personal reaction to his death?

GA: When I first ran for lieutenant governor, Larry [Mehau] was one of the first persons to come to me to tell me that he will take care of a lot of contacts—he had tremendous contact on the neighbor islands. He'll take care of all of that. But he said I don't have to worry, "I don't want a title. I have some baggage and I don't want to take that with me, for you to carry the baggage. I'll do that but don't name me as your coordinator or anything like that. I'll just do it for you."

My response to Larry was, "Larry, you're my friend. I know you. I've known you for a long time. I know you to be a very clean, decent, honest person. You've helped so many people." Police officers went to Larry and told Larry they were concerned about being threatened by the underworld. Larry had to go step in. And Larry used to tell me, "I used to go to Alema," I forgot what the last name was. It was a . . .

TC: Alema Leota.

GA: Yeah. He said, "There were times when I felt I wasn't sure I was going to come out of the place," but he said, "I went because I wanted them to know that they were dealing with my friends." But Larry was that kind of person. And very honest. I happened to be working for Fred Patterson and do a lot of criminal work at that time, gambling. Larry was on the vice squad. He was involved with a lot of gambling arrests. But the people who he arrested always felt that Larry was a very decent, clean and honest police and they respected him.

MK: That's Larry Mehau.

GA: Larry Mehau. One time they told me a story about Larry Mehau how he came out to a gambling house in Chinatown. You got to get through three doors in order to be where they are. By the time anybody goes up there, they all got rid of all the gambling paraphernalia. But this one time, Larry went up because somebody threatened him and he got word that person was looking for him. So he busted down the first door, busted the second door, busted the third door down. He got up there and he said, "Where is that guy?" And he was not there. Larry told them, "Tell him that I am looking for him now. If he's looking for me, tell him he can find me any time." After that, the guy was so scared, nothing happened. That's Larry Mehau. That's the kind of person he was. He had great

respect—gamblers that I represented, Big Snake, Small Snake, they all had respect for Larry. Honest cop. He never tried to get anything from us. He never lied to try to get a conviction.

So later on when they started talking about Larry having all these connections, that he was the godfather, I knew what it was. When Governor Burns asked him to go snoop around to get information, it was these kinds of people who were leaders who had respect for him and Larry could go to them, “What you guys heard about this thing?” That’s what I knew about Larry.

I knew that when Judge [Harry] Steiner, who was the head of the district court, the judge who presided over many of the cases, Judge Steiner told me, “When Larry Mehau speaks, I believe him.” So that’s the reputation that Larry had.

TC: I want to clarify one point. When you talked about Larry talking with Alema Leota, for example, you were talking about Larry Mehau. Okay? Because we’ve talked about two Larrys here in the same conversation, so we should just clarify the record.

WN: I think the original question was about Larry Kuriyama.

TC: Yeah.

WN: About how did you react.

TC: What if we continue this and then we go back a little bit because this is very sensitive and to some extent, this was used to blacken your reputation. Right? You were a friend of Larry Mehau. Well, maybe we’ve covered it. Is there anything more you want to add to this because he would then become your neighbor island coordinator, for example, in your gubernatorial campaign?

GA: That’s right. I told him, “You’re my friend. I’m not going to ask you to help me because you’re my friend and say that I’m ashamed to have people know that you’re my friend. You’re my friend and you help me and I’m not afraid to let people know that you’re my friend. You’re going to be my neighbor island coordinator.”

TC: That was a matter of record.

GA: That’s right.

TC: It was announced.

GA: And he was officially with the campaign organization. He was my neighbor island coordinator.

TC: He also coordinated the—you had a lot of important support from the entertainers. He organized them for you.

GA: That’s right. He put it all together for me.

TC: You had friendships with people like Don Ho and so on but Larry kind of kept things moving in that regard.

GA: Right. Yes.

TC: How important was that as a campaign—it was one of the strengths of your campaign.

GA: Yeah, they were a big draw on the neighbor islands. Especially every time we went to the neighbor islands, Do Ho and Zulu and Frank DeLima all went with us. I think I was not the draw, they were the draw.

(Laughter)

TC: Why was Larry so influential with them?

GA: Because they all went to him when they needed help. I think they knew that he would do that because of friendship, not because he wanted anything from them.

TC: I'm personally a little curious about Alema Leota because I remember him (chuckles). I had a very weird experience. Remember Coco's, when it was Coco's? I was sitting in this booth talking to this friend of mine, and it happened that Alema Leota was in the next booth. Alema Leota—do you know who he was or what he looked like? He was a very athletic, very . . .

GA: Tough guy.

TC: He was a very tough guy. He was very nice looking. He also had a nice way about him. You know, he'd sit and talk to people, was sort of friendly et cetera. I spilled sugar off of—sugar in the ice tea—spilled it on the floor and it spilled out right in front of him.

(Laughter)

I knew that this guy's supposed to be the head of the underworld, right? (Laughs) I'm on my knees right next to him trying to clean up the sugar and he's howling. He's laughing because he realizes how ludicrous it is. He realizes that I'm aware of who he is but it's okay. It was a funny moment.

You said that Larry went and talked to him about something and Larry thought, "Maybe I'm not going to walk out of this alive." He [Alema Leota] had a reputation for tremendous violence. What did Larry tell you or what do you remember about that? I'm curious.

GA: About?

TC: About Leota and he's . . .

GA: Not very much. Larry never really talked too much. I only knew that Leota was the head of the organization at that particular time.

TC: He lived and faded away to Samoa and he lived. I want to ask a little more of a framework question. At this time, there was with Larry Kuriyama's death and then there were some shoot-outs in Chinatown, there was an air of violence that was going on that was related to conflicts within the underworld. What was your feeling about that, your impressions, and you had defended—who did you say, “Big Snake,” “Little Snake.” What does that mean? They were in gambling games in Chinatown.

WN: We got about two minutes.

TC: Two minutes, so we can take a little break.

GA: I did not have any contact with Alema Leota. I don't know very much about him.

TC: Did you know George Han? The gambler.

GA: Attorney?

TC: Not the attorney George Han, the gambler George Han. He was a very influential gambler during that period. He used to like to—the head of the Korean group.

GA: I didn't know him.

TC: They used to come to our family New Year's, that why.

(Laughter)

WN: Alema didn't come to your . . .

TC: (Laughs) No. Okay so we've got to change tape. Have a little break.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

TC: I want to make one comment for the transcript. That is, a lot of people who read this transcript will not know that Governor Burns was originally a policeman and that his relationship with Larry Mehau evolved from a common reference of the police department. Jack Burns was a high-level policeman, investigator, vice squad at one point, so the idea of talking to kind of a fellow policeman was not strange. It was part of who they were, who he was, who Larry Mehau was, because otherwise it might be perceived as a governor who had this kind of odd street contact, which doesn't capture the context of it. I think that should be in the record.

MK: By that time, what was Larry Mehau's profession? He had left the police force?

TC: He had been out of the police force a little while, I think, at that point. He had a ranch on the Big Island.

MK: Did he also have a security firm?

TC: That's right.

- GA: Hawai'i Protective Service provided security to many.
- MK: This is a continuation of our session twelve.
- TC: Okay. We've talked some about Governor Burns involving you in all the affairs of governing, cabinet meetings, many days where you would spend six or eight hours a day with him in the ramp-up to—during lieutenant governor time. He was determined from the outset that you were going to run for governor. How did you take to this incessant kind of mentoring, throwing you into things, was it all positive?
- GA: Yeah. I accepted what he was trying to do, feeling that he was trying to teach me the ropes of being governor, the day-to-day operations, what happens when you're governor. So I accepted. Most of the meetings that he had, appointment, he always told them, "Lieutenant governor and I sit together."
- TC: Then you became acting governor. We talked about that process. Then the different campaigns started. At that point, Tom Gill and Frank Fasi were both still better known than you.
- GA: That's right.
- TC: Your familiarity with the broad public was going up pretty steeply but they had just been around more at high office. So how did you view the situation, political situation, as it was evolving?
- GA: Well, number one, I wanted to train myself and understand the job well, better than anybody else, better than Tom Gill or Frank Fasi. I had to feel for myself that if I made it and became governor, I could do a better job than either of them or anybody else. If I didn't have that feeling, it would be hard for me to go out and campaign. That's what I worked on. Governor Burns trained me, gave me the opportunity to get to know what the job was all about. I lived the work of being governor for quite a while myself, so when I ran, when the campaign started, I campaigned with the idea that I could do a better job than anybody else could. To me, you've got to have that feeling otherwise you can't campaign well.
- TC: What did you see as Frank Fasi's appeal, political appeal, and what did you see as Tom Gill's political appeal, or their strengths?
- GA: Frank Fasi—Frank was a mayor and he tried to convey the notion that he gets the work done, that he knows how to get the work done. Tom Gill's appeal was more towards being anti-growth, but being more concerned about the growth that was taking place in Hawai'i. In many ways, I felt the same way that he did. I was concerned about the great growth that was taking place, too. I think the difference between Tom and me was that I was able to talk about the details and be patient enough to involve people to make them feel the same way I did and to have them go out and do the work. Whereas Tom Gill was—his was a pronouncement, by talking I'm going to tell people what they have to do and what has to be done. But things don't get done in our community just by talking about something. You got to pay attention to the details and get people involved and get enough feelings amongst the people who get involved that they want to participate. They

want to make things happen in a way that we want them to help. I think that's the difference. Those are the differences between Tom Gill and Frank Fasi and me. Frank was always attacking, attacking, attacking.

WN: Tom and Frank were both known as being very articulate, almost glib politicians. You know, that politicians' mold. Did you feel any kind of intimidation at all by their ability to speak?

GA: Frank Fasi always talked about oh, I can't speak. Which is true, I'm not a polished speaker. To me, that's not what's important. What's important is what you think about, how you feel, and how you're going to do the things and be able to communicate that to people. I think that's what I was able to communicate. I may not have been a very polished speaker and go up and stand before large groups and really rile everybody up, but I was able. That's why I was so effective in coffee hours. I was able to sit down with people and talk to them in language that they understood about the kind of things that are important to Hawai'i and how they might be concerned. All through that's what my campaign was all about.

When Jack Burns told me, in 1970, the morning of the primary election, when they came back from the Big Island, he told me that he felt I was going to make it but he wasn't sure that he was going to make it, I really felt bad. I thought to myself, "Why this man throughout the campaign, he has doubts about his making it." He must have felt really bad. I told him, "Governor, you have not been campaigning. I have. I've been out day and night talking to people and I know how people are thinking. I know you're going to make it. You and I are going to make it."

TC: How did you feel when you won the night in 1974?

GA: The first thing I did when I felt that I was sure about the race, I went to the hospital. Jack Burns was there and I wanted to thank him for everything he had done for me. His response to me was: "Don't thank me. I thank you for making my dreams come true." That's essentially how I felt.

TC: Bob Oshiro was in the hospital, I think, too. Now he was in the hospital around 1970, wasn't he? Did Bob manage your campaign in '74 as well?

GA: He managed my campaign in '74. He kind of co-assisted my 1970 campaign. Seventy-four he took the campaign over, '78 he took my campaign over, '82 he managed my campaign. Every campaign, I couldn't take him for granted. I couldn't assume that he was going to be [campaign manager], after my '74 election. It would have been easy for me to assume that he was going to be my campaign manager again, but I couldn't take him for granted. In 1982 I had to sit with him and tell him what I did during the four-year period and why I should make it for the next term. I had to convince Bob Oshiro that I was the best person for the job, that I had done the job, and that the next four years I had to be there also. It was not until he was satisfied that he committed to take over the campaign (chuckles).

MK: And by then he had known you for several years.

- GA: Mm-hmm. But even in '82 he wanted to be sure that I had not changed, that I still maintain the momentum that I wanted to maintain going to the next four years.
- TC: How would you describe Bob to the people who never knew him?
- GA: To me, number one, Bob is a great intellect. He's really a very bright, mindful person. Good thinker. Not only was he a good thinker, but he expected people that were going to be involved to think about the things that are important to the community. Bob, more than any campaign manager that I know of, he knew how to get the work done. His whole theory was you got to talk to people. You can't stay on the top and just talk about the campaign, you got to get people motivated, get involved. That's a lesson I learned from him when I took over the state plan. Bob Oshiro, he didn't tell me, but I learned from him during the campaign, how to motivate, how to work with people, how to get things done. For me the state plan, I knew what I wanted to have done and applied the same ideas Bob applied: Get people, talk to them, motivate them, have them get involved, have them feeling very strongly that this is a necessity. The same way that he made people feel to get motivated, get involved, have them feel they got to make successful, this candidate.
- MK: How did he do it? How did he get people motivated?
- GA: He spent a lot of time calling people in. He identified people who could be good leaders in a campaign. He called them in. He talked to them about the campaign and how important it was, and what kind of role can they play. He didn't tell them, "You got to do this." It was up to them to play whatever role they can play in the overall scheme. That's what Bob was really good at. It was not him telling them what the campaign is going to be doing, the general plan he had, but coming down to all the individual pieces he all left it up to people. "You tell me what you can do. How can you participate in this campaign, make it successful? What's your strengths? What kind of contacts do you have? How can you reach those people?" What I learned from him and the campaign, I think, essentially it was, I learned about how to run a government as governor. All the same kind of things. Getting people involved, motivating them, making them feel that it's important that we do this, and asking for help. Asking for help, very, very important and people don't do that. I think leaders feel when they ask for help, it shows a sign of weakness, so being inadequate. I think asking for help is the right thing to do to get people to come in and participate.
- MK: Yeah, that seems like a very personal approach to campaigning, very personal approach to government. How did that all fit in with this growing media involvement? This was a time when you have more and more TV commercials and half-hour shows.
- GA: Yeah. Bob Oshiro and Walter Dods. Walter Dods on the media side, and he watched the dollars very, very carefully. We didn't spend money unnecessarily in the wrong kind of way for media. I can look back on my campaign and I can say that not once did I feel we had done the campaign piece that we should not have done, that we spent monies unnecessarily. Walter was very good. He watched it very carefully for me. So we had that side of it. Walter believed very strongly in the importance of media, mass media.

Bob Oshiro felt it was the people working together. But Bob Oshiro also felt that the media—both the media together with the general public [were vital]. Bob Oshiro, media, to motivate our campaign workers. They can feel that, “Oh, we’re working hard.” They’re working hard to make the candidate, too. So the media was being used in two ways. Walter wanted to reach the mass of the people. Bob Oshiro wanted to use the media to motivate the people and to let them know that we were doing all these things.

He was the campaign genius, Bob Oshiro. What was good about him was, he was not crooked, he was honest, he did it because he felt very strongly about the community. Many people who do the kind of things that he does, could have asked for huge amount of monies for him to get involved, participate. And they do. All the national campaigns, the advisors that come in, they’re not doing it for free. They’re getting paid for the work that they do, for their expertise. Bob was the best and he never asked for one penny.

TC: Joe Napolitan [political consultant, Napolitan and Associates] tried to get him to become a national consultant afterward. I don’t know if you ever heard that story.

GA: No.

TC: Joe Napolitan thought he was a genius. Napolitan was probably the most nationally recognized person.

GA: I guess Napolitan learned a lot from Bob Oshiro also.

TC: Most people whose focus is campaigning, talk about power in a kind of raw sense. Our goal is to win the election, get power, or stay in power. Bob Oshiro took it to a completely different level. I don’t remember him ever talking in those crude political terms even. He never asked to be paid. He never went into the government afterward. Did you try to get him to come into the government?

GA: I never did.

TC: You wanted to keep that . . .

GA: Because I felt that he was a gem out there and I should not interrupt him from what he was doing.

TC: Did you ever go out to his office in Wahiawā?

GA: No.

TC: He would return to his office in Wahiawā. He would become a country lawyer again, after he would pour himself into a campaign. Then he would retreat. I personally felt it was part of his—the process by which he stayed in touch with ordinary people as opposed to the whole political thing.

GA: Some of the things that continue to get me involved, affairs of the community, I think it’s because that’s what I saw Bob Oshiro doing. In a campaign way, he was doing that. But he was not talking about just winning a campaign. He was talking about what the campaign meant to move people and doing the right things. The right thing was not

necessarily voting for George Ariyoshi; the right thing was understanding the things that we believed in, understanding how important those things were and going ahead and carrying it out. That's what the state plan was all about. People who worked in our campaign, who understood and felt very strongly that there was a need for them to be involved, that's what I think our campaign was. It was not only winning the election, it was winning the ideas, the thoughts that became important for Hawai'i.

TC: From the primary, you emerged as the victor. You were initially a little bit behind, and you went a little bit ahead, substantially ahead. That night, Tom Gill said he was never going to run again.

GA: Nineteen seventy-four, now.

TC: Nineteen seventy-four. He said that he was basically through with elective politics. How did you . . .

GA: I didn't know that. I don't remember that.

TC: How did you, on an ongoing basis, see Tom—you became governor—and how did you see Frank Fasi? There were two very different positions that they were in at that point.

GA: Ignore them. My feeling was there was too much to be done. That's what I wanted to concentrate on doing. Frank Fasi, the day after he lost the election, he was attacking me already. I just let it go. I remember Jack Burns told me, "Don't respond. He's going to repeat it again the next day." I felt I was too busy. I wanted to do a good job. You see, I wanted to do a good job and people don't understand what a heavy burden that I had. I wanted to do a good job as governor because that's what I was elected for. But, I also understood that if I didn't do a good job, if I messed it up, I was going to hurt the people who—all the Japanese Americans, for example. I was going to hurt [John] Waihee, and other kinds of people who were going to be aspiring. So I had the burden of wanting to do a good job to run the government, but I had the burden of not wanting to do anything that would create problems for other people. And the word *haji* came in too. I didn't want to bring shame to anybody, those people who were close around me.

TC: Could you explain to people who will read this what that meant, *haji*?

GA: *Haji* is shame. My father always used to tell me, "Don't bring shame to your friends, your family. Always be honorable."

WN: Was there also that feeling or threat that if you didn't do a good job, Frank Fasi would swoop right in and be governor? Was that always on your mind?

GA: Not really. I guess I knew that he was out there doing everything, snapping at me. By that time, I had developed pretty thick skin. (Chuckles) I could take all that.

(Laughter)

So I had to concentrate on doing the best job that I could and spend all my time and energy in that direction.

MK: As you describe it, you had a tremendous load to bear. It's not only doing a good job as governor, but it's also keeping that door open for others who might follow you. And then worrying about not bringing any shame to yourself or to the community. How . . .

GA: And developing a style. That style that I took for me was working with people, acknowledging that without help from people, I can't get things done. Everything I did, that part played a very important role. When I swore in board of commission members, I tried to be there. I tried to tell them how diverse the group is, by design, and how much I wanted every person to participate. I wanted input. I want them to participate, instead of having one person who is a strong person or board getting his or her way. I wanted all the options so we could get the best selection instead of one strong person taking the lead. That's what I wanted, from people who participate and become involved in the process.

In the budget process, my finance process, I felt that I could come up with a plan. My plan was not to lay off anybody, not to cut wages. My plan was to not fill positions but I couldn't do it by myself. I could not fill the positions but what happens to the service? Government, public service, would have suffered. So I had to find a way to not cut services, to not lay off people, not cut the salaries, and my way, what I had to do was bring the people in and ask for help. Tell them I'm not going to lay off, not pay cut, but you got to help me provide the service. That means if you have five, four people—five people working before and one retires, and I don't fill that, the four got to do not what four are doing, four got to do what all five are doing. That's the kind of help I went to the people to ask for.

MK: At that time, ask four people to do the job of five people, to have their willingness to do something like that, there's almost like on your part, an expectation or an understanding that we should all share the certain value of cooperation. I'm wondering, was that the case? How did people react?

GA: I believe very strongly that this community, more than any other community, if they understood what the problems were, and they understood the need to work together, they would come together. I have a very strong feeling and conviction about Hawai'i's people. You've got to tell them what the circumstances are. You've got to tell them what the problems are. You've got to tell them how you're going to solve it. You've got to tell them, "Please come and help because we need that kind of help in order to make it possible."

MK: What gave you that faith in the people that they would do that?

GA: Because that's what I did all my life, the whole idea of *okagesama de*. My father telling me no matter how good a person, you can't do it yourself, you got to get people to come and help you, work with you.

MK: I asked that question, because sometimes I wonder, if nowadays, do people share that kind of understanding, mutuality? *Okagesama de*. How can you get people who maybe don't have that kind of feeling to do what you want them to do?

GA: That's what I think I try to continue to get people to understand and to talk to people.

MK: How did you show your appreciation to, say, like government workers, who were willing to work a little bit harder, pull a little bit more weight? What did you do for . . .

GA: I talked to them every Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. I walked through the departments, had somebody meet me there and take me to meet all the employees and I wished them a merry Christmas. I also told them how grateful I am about the help that I received from them in running the state government. I couldn't cover it all that morning. So New Year's Eve, that morning, I did the same thing. I couldn't get outside of the capitol area but I went through all the departments, everything around the capitol area. I walked to express holiday greetings but especially to express my gratitude for the work they've done to make things happen in state government.

MK: How did people react? I bet they didn't expect the governor to come in.

GA: Yeah. After a few years, I think they expected me to do that (chuckles). They expected that I was going to come down but they were always very grateful that I took the time to come. I don't think anybody does it now.

MK: The way you're treating government workers, personally, how did you ask your department head to treat those who work with that understanding?

GA: They had the same sense that I had. They felt very strongly that they were one person only in a department and without the help of many others in the department, they cannot get the work done. I always talk about, "I can't do it myself as governor. It's too big. I need help." But I also acknowledged that without the direct help of the people who work under them, they cannot. I had people come to me sometimes, telling me—they think they established a relationship with me—they come up to me and tell me and grumble about what's happening in the state in their department. I always told them to go back and talk to their director because I can't do anything about the situation. "This is something you've got to work out within the department. The way to work it out, you go talk to the director. You tell them what's wrong, what has to be done, and the remedy for the situation that you think is wrong. And you are providing a service to the director." That's what it means. When you work for us, for government, anybody, you're not working only to provide the service that's required, you're providing the opportunity for everybody to do the things in the right kind of way. If something is wrong you've got to tell the people above you that those things are wrong so they can be fixed. That's the spirit and attitude that I tried to get in all the departments.

MK: When it came to budgetary matters, you're kind of conservative. You weren't very free with the money. What was your philosophy in being that way?

GA: You see, I'm willing to take the rap. Insults are bound to happen. I was willing to have someone tell, oh, blame the governor because the governor didn't do this or he didn't release the monies. For me, if I were going to be responsible, I got to get not only the credit for many things, but I got to take the blame for things we cannot do. I never wanted to pass the blame on to somebody else. I think that's what made it possible for me to get the kind of results that I want from people who work with me. It was my fault. I'm responsible for that. You couldn't do anything further with that with what you had. So

- I'm willing to take the rap for it. People understood that, so they were willing to put extra effort not to create those problems for me.
- TC: I remember when you told the story about your boyhood. One of the stories that I particularly remember is that you and your friends would all pool a penny together until you had five pennies or ten pennies and then you would go buy . . .
- GA: Oh, Love's Bakery on Iwilei.
- MK: Maybe you could tell us that story.
- TC: Was that part of what you took to—economically hard times as governor but there was kind of a—was that part of you?
- GA: Yeah. I think there was a bit of frugality in me. I'm a very frugal person. Even in my own personal life, I don't spend money unnecessarily. I'd rather spend money on other things, other people, rather than spend it myself. I used to, when we were kids, collect maybe five pennies, go to Love's Bakery. We'd buy a whole box of day-old pastries. They were still very good yet. Maybe it might cost a quarter or fifty cents to buy that many. Big box, we bought. We used to go down to Pier 16. Under Pier 16, there was a sandy area and that was our Sandy Beach.
- MK: (Chuckles) So you went out there with your pastries that you bought with pooled-together pennies.
- WN: Governor, being a fiscal conservative, and yet a social progressive, was that a common combination or trait in the Democratic party in Hawai'i? Would you say that's the norm or did you consider yourself sort of outside the norm with this combination?
- GA: I don't think the fiscal part was there strongly, but that's the Democratic party. Their goal is to take care of people who need to be helped. I think that's the difference in Democratic party and Republican party. Republicans feel that you don't have to help those people. You make them weaker by helping. They let them take care of themselves and they can learn. But, you know, some people can do that, and there are many people who don't come to government for help because they can take care of themselves. But there are people who really don't have the means to take care of themselves. They don't have the means. They don't know how to take care of themselves and they're unable to. These are not people who are useless. For example, Social Security, a person gets older and a person looks forward to getting help from Social Security. They need that kind of help. Medical help, you know when you get sick, you got to get help. Medicare is very important to people who get sick. Medicaid is very helpful to people who don't qualify for Medicare yet, but who get sick and who are unable to take care of themselves. The Democrats believe that there are things that have to be done to take care of, help people. Republicans feel they should be able to fend for themselves. You make them lazy when you try to take care of them.
- MK: Having grown up in Pālama, Kalihi and those areas that are economically depressed, immigrant populations, real working class people, how much did you see of life there that told you, "Yeah, people need help"?

GA: When I saw, when I was growing up, people who were not that wealthy, but people who knew how to fend for themselves, they never asked for help; they did it all. My father and mother never asked for any help, welfare help. They never asked for medical help. They did it all on their own. I think people around me, living, for example, in Pālama, that's what they all did. They somehow struggled but they were able to make things work out for themselves. My father used to tell me, "Don't spend money unnecessarily." But he always told me also that when it comes time to spend for things that you need, don't be afraid to spend. You save so you can spend like that.

MK: That's kind of interesting. You grew up in these places where people—they're just living, managing on their own. But later on when you go into government service, you would be supportive of giving help.

GA: The people that I knew, they could work, they had work, but I became aware there were some people who may want to work but don't know how to work, and cannot work, and cannot find a job. There are people today—medicine is very different, medical treatment—who cannot get medical help if they have to do it themselves. We have to provide, government provide, the resources and provide people who are trained to help, medical help. So, I see that difference now compared to what I used to see when I was growing up. But back in those days, no more Social Security, no more Medicaid, no more Medicare, so people were forced to fend for themselves. I think many people fall through the cracks. Many people suffer the consequence of not being able to get that kind of help.

TC: As you, in your capacity as governor, you related outward to, in both directions, you related to Asia in very interesting ways—some of that we talked about—and then also to national governors and other national figures in the national administration. Could you talk a little bit about your interaction with other governors and the fact that you were the first Japanese American governor? So there you were, you showed up and what happens?

GA: Living in a state like Hawai'i, you begin to understand the importance of being more international. We are separated twenty-five hundred miles from the rest of America and thirty-five hundred miles from the rest of Asia. So you begin to feel that—we begin to feel here that being international is a very normal and natural and necessary part of our existence. People on the Mainland don't necessarily feel like that so they were going with the flow. And the flow was across the Atlantic and that side is important [to them], but the Pacific side [was viewed] not that important. The people are different, the circumstance very different. I was very concerned about that—so was [Mike] Mansfield—very concerned that things across the Atlantic [was deemed important] but not across the Pacific, and yet we had a large population based here in the Pacific. It's a very natural for us to think about being more international, not so with the [other] governors.

So when I became chairman of the Western Governors Association, I looked at what had to be done. I looked at the great void in the way governors looked at Asia and international work. They looked at the economy more in terms of what they were doing, without looking at more international economic involvement. So I preached the notion that America had become more international. I preached that at the Western Governors. When I preached that, the principal government in this area was Japan. The people began to feel: Ah! He's Japanese American that's why he has a bias towards Japan. That's why

he's trying to do this. I heard that, and I had to get them together the next morning. First thing we got together and I told them that's what I heard. "I want to talk about that. I don't want to hide it under the rug. I am Japanese American." But I told them, "My first obligation is to my country and to my state. I'm very loyal to my country and my state. But in order for me to be loyal to my country and my state, I got to speak about the things we need to do in order for our country and our state to be in the best situation." I said, "As a father, if I see my children do something wrong, I'm not going to let that go. I'm going to talk to them about it because I don't want them to continue to do wrong things. I want them to do the right things so they can become better, grow up and become better people. I feel the same way in government. When I see the opportunity that Western states have to be more involved in international activities, to me if you're not doing it, I think we are at fault for not looking ahead. That's my basis for talking about the need for our states to become more international."

All the governors listened to me and told me that day, "Governor, we're sorry we even thought about your background. We understand how strongly you feel about the need for becoming more international."

When [President] Bill Clinton made his first trip to Japan, at that time the economy was not very good. On his way back he asked me if I could stop by to see him. I went to see him in his room. He asked me how I felt about the meetings, I told him this: "As good as possible under the circumstances."

He said, "Are there some things that could be done?"

I told him, "Yeah." I told him that the problem was what they were doing was, everything was big business. They have a consultant and they're all ready to go ahead and look at markets out there and become more international. But we don't have small business becoming more international. By small business I'm referring to businesses that hire three or four hundred people. They're not involved internationally. In order for us to become—create a stronger nation, we've got to take advantage of the opportunities that are out there. If we don't, we're going to find countries out there, businesses out there, becoming involved in our business and doing business in America. We are not doing the same things. That's what we got to do.

He told me, "You have any ideas?" He told me, "Will you help me?"

I told him, "Yes I will."

He said, "What do you need to do that?" He said, "How much money do you need to do that?"

I said, "I don't need any monies. I need understanding and I need the federal government to support what I'm putting together." I told him, and he assigned at that time—his second in command was, deputy director was, Roy Neel. Roy was there. He said he talked to Roy. I met with him and I told him about my ideas. I told him that I wanted to go to the American governors' conference and I want to tell every governor to identify small businesses—by small businesses, I meant businesses that can have up to four or five hundred employees—who want to, and are willing to have products or services that

can become international. I want governors to work with Japan governors and talk to them about identifying businesses there in each of their prefectures that have an interest in doing this kind of international business and we can put the two together. The governors thought it was a good idea and worked to go ahead and move it. But I couldn't do anything about it because of the political situation within the administration. They were concerned, they didn't know me. They thought I was doing this as a way for me to get business to feather my own nest and to make some monies on this offer. I didn't know that was the situation until almost two years later when the president found out I was in Washington, his secretary called me and told me to come in. I was going to leave Washington, back to New York at that point, but I cancelled the stay and I went to the president. When I got to the president, see at the White House—the chief of staff, he called me off on the side. He said, “Before you go to see the president, I want you to know he's very concerned about the conflict of interest.”

I told him, “What?”

“Conflict of interest that you are going to be involved in this thing and you're proposing it and you're going to get something out of the thing to the embarrassment of the administration.”

I told him, “Why didn't somebody call me and tell me this? You know what, I was willing then and I'm still willing now to sign off everything that I will never profit from this thing. I will not get involved beyond putting it together to work.” It was too late. Too much of that kind of concern that was expressed. I still feel that if somebody could go and convince the national governors, convince the Japanese governors, that they can play this kind of role, I'm convinced they could play, become, a very important role.

TC: Let me ask a question. You told of two different times, first with your talking with the Western governors about expanding a relationship with Japan, secondly, talking with President Clinton about expanding. In each of those instances, there was this suspicion that somehow you as a Japanese American had an ulterior motive. That's the common theme. I wonder what your perception is of what was at work. There was this history of raw prejudice against Japanese Americans, Asians. You know, Asians are too aggressive. They will outwork us. There's this backdrop that we had for a long time. Japan, this was a period where, like, Harvard professors were writing books like *Japan as Number One*, et cetera. There was this sense of Japan was somehow imperiling America's domination. I wonder if you could comment on both the big background and that immediate thing about Japan scaring people.

GA: The Western governors, they felt that maybe I had a kind of bias because of my Japanese background. With the national level, I think so much of it goes on. Everybody—not everybody, so many people, out there in Washington, trying to find a way to make money somehow. I think I got caught up in that suspicion; they felt that's why I was there—not so much because of my Japanese background but I was there because I found that this was the way that maybe I could make some monies. That's what blocked everything.

Subsequently, Bill Clinton appointed me to an advisory council on trade policies and negotiation. That's the highest international trade body. We report to the president and we report to the Congress on international trade. We worked with the trade negotiator,

Mickey Kantor. We provided direction to Mickey Kantor. That's what the advisory council is all about. I found there that people were—all representing all the big businesses. They were all there wanting to campaign on their own business perspective. I raised questions about what about the country's perspective. I raised questions about what was being requested. I think I became very uncomfortable at one point and I had to go back to the president and tell him, "Gee, I wonder if I should continue to serve."

He said, "Please stay on because I think your point of view is very important."

TC: What made you uncomfortable? Can you comfortably talk about what that tension point was because that's pretty serious that you would take up the president's time.

GA: Because I was a small potato. Other people, presidents of Caterpillar, president of Chrysler, they had big titles. But me, I had no title like that. So I was almost like, I don't know the business. I don't know what I'm talking about. That's kind of the sense that I felt from them.

MK: The sense that you weren't being taken seriously, you're being ignored.

GA: Yeah.

TC: Do you think that if you say that America historically is a Eurocentric country, an Atlantic-facing country, and we very comfortably have these things about our ties with England and all the things we derive from England, we have these, you know Lafayette and so have ties with France and ties with Poland and Italy and in ways where we say these were things that shaped America. Right? I think that through yourself and through other people, it's very obvious that Japanese cultural influence flowed into the American system and into what really makes America what it is, but there's this resistance that you describe in different ways. Do you think that Japan has made a contribution in the way that European countries have made a contribution? What is the nature of this resistance? Nobody wants to say that, Governor. Okay?

GA: I think there's been a great change from the time when I first witnessed bias on the Atlantic side, eastern side, change that has come about.

You look at what is happening in Asia now, not only Japan, but Hong Kong and China and Singapore, all the rest of the countries out there getting economically better. So that now, it's a great reliance on trade intercourse with not only Japan but all the countries in Asia. If you look at now, at the current situation, it's not Asia that's pulling our country down, it's Europe. Greece and Rome and Spain and all the problems that exist out there are creating all the economic problems for our country. Stock market being affected by what's happening out there. In fact, what is holding everything up now is the Asian side, Pacific side. So there's been a great change in what has happened within the area in Europe generally and Japanese, the Pacific Basin side.

TC: How about recognition that Asian approaches, Hawai'i as—Hawai'i became a unique society, being an Asian American state predominantly et cetera—recognition that we have contributed to making America what it is, changing America, affecting America.

GA: I think Hawai'i has played a great role in making people in Asia feel more comfortable about dealing with America, making people understand people. You know, people are funny. If you look alike, no matter what other differences there may be, if you look alike, there's a natural affinity. If you don't look alike, if you look different, even though you have some common ground that you get involved in, there's still that feeling. At some point, even though things may be very good now, I think it's going to be very natural for many people to see, "Eh, they're Asians." As a result, not have that kind of intercourse that takes place now. I think that's where we play a very, very important role in making people understand, America understand, that don't look at what the people look like, don't look at what their culture has been, but look at who they are and what they are today and how they can become part of, mix with everybody else.

TC: Where shall we go from here? We have one minute. Okay. Where shall we go?

MK: How 'bout we end now?

TC: I know you're not feeling great but I feel like we're really going so I don't want to bring this to a stop. What do you think?

MK: Well, I was thinking why don't we just break here.

TC: Okay.

MK: I think the governor needs a break. (GA chuckles.)

WN: I think you have a cold.

TC: I know you weren't feeling great. I think the conversation was really good. Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-22-13-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

October 10, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

MK: Okay. This is session number thirteen.

GA: (Chuckles) You folks must get tired of seeing me.

(Laughter)

MK: No! We're worried about you getting tired of seeing us.

GA: I'm not tired.

MK: It is session thirteen and it's October 10, 2012. The interviewers are Tom Coffman, Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. We're all here in Honolulu, O'ahu to continue our interview series with you, Governor Ariyoshi. We'll start with a real easy question. We got you to the point where you are governor and we had this question in our minds. At what point did you feel like now you're a real public figure, so much so that maybe even going out to get a quart of milk at the Safeway would make you think twice about: "Oh, I better change my clothes first." At what point did you feel like, okay, the public is really watching me?

GA: I didn't mind going out and meeting people and coming to the office and talking to people, but I was self-conscious about going to the market with Jeanie. We didn't have to do that kind of shopping when I was governor very much. Once in a while I went out with her. When I did, I did feel people staring or talking (chuckles).

MK: How did you deal with that?

GA: Well, I felt that it was part of the job. Everything that I did, I felt that was part of the job and that was something I had to accept and be willing to accept. The hardest part about my becoming a public servant on a full-time basis was giving up my law practice. That was the hardest thing that I had to deal with because for me, being a lawyer and doing my work as a lawyer was a life-long dream fulfilled. Every day I went to the office and I was really happy that I was able to go and do what I wanted to do.

MK: When you say giving up your practice, what does that entail? Did it mean totally closing your practice?

GA: That's what it was. When I was in the legislature, it was part-time so I could maintain my office hours after the legislative session. But when I became governor, I had to close my law office, sever my relationships with my law partners. I had to give up—not had to, but I gave up all of my directorships. I gave up directorship to First Hawaiian Bank. I was at Pacific Resources [Inc.], Hawaiian Insurance and Guaranty [Company, Ltd.]. Being a director also, they pay you pretty good too. So I had to give up not only my law practice, but substantial income.

MK: How did that affect your family economically? You had three kids to send to school and college.

GA: It affected them. At the very beginning, I was very fortunate that I had holdover fees that I had billed that I had not collected and they started to come in. I had a pretty good practice, so they were very substantial and that tied me over for a while. Then when I was lieutenant governor, salary was about \$32,000. Half a month's salary, after deductions for expenses, came out to 800-something dollars. I looked at the thing and I thought to myself, "Wow, how am I going to make it?"

(Laughter)

GA: But fortunately I had some fees that were still coming in so that kept me going for a while. I had to sell some assets that I had in order to survive. When I became governor, it was a little bit different because now I had a home and everything was provided for me. But when I was lieutenant governor, I had my own home, all of my expenses, expenses with my family, my children.

MK: How did Mrs. Ariyoshi take all this?

GA: You know, she was very good. That's where I feel I was very fortunate, that Jeanie understood and she fit into everything that I felt that I had responsibility for. For example, when we got married, she knew that I was the eldest son and that I had responsibility for my parents and that my parents and we lived together. She did it very willingly. I know it was not easy for her and she had to make adjustments in order to do that, but she was willing to do that because she understood that that was part of the responsibility, that I had to share. She understood also that it was not just a burden to take care of my parents but I felt good about assuring them that they were going to be okay with us, that they don't have to worry about separating and going on their own. From that period on, she fit in very nicely, supported everything that I did. She never questioned what I had to do, very supportive. In terms of living during that period when things were very rough, she went along with it and she tried to help.

TC: One of the things that you just said, you referred to a little bit, but I think it was a pretty major financial factor was you had to sell off accumulated [assets]—like you maybe had a condominium, a little interest in several houses. Those are things you had to work very hard to acquire over a long period of time and it was kind of your nest egg in a way. Right?

GA: Right.

TC: Maybe we could focus this by saying the point at which you realized, “I’ve got to sell something just to maintain my family in the way that we’re used to—the schools and the houses.” When did you face that and then how often did it come up? Because people don’t really realize that.

GA: I think I faced it almost immediately. As soon as I saw my first paycheck, I knew that every month I was going to have a shortfall in my paycheck. If I had not given up my directorship, I would have had several good incomes to keep me going but I gave that up also. So I got my income from my law practice, which I had already built up to the point where I was in a very comfortable situation. Then I also realized that I had to find some resources to make some adjustments. Monies coming from my fees that I had earned before helped. But I knew that time was going to come when I had to get rid of some assets that I had in order to make ends meet.

MK: When those times came, were there any second thoughts? You have the kids, have Mrs. Ariyoshi, and your mother and father.

GA: No. It didn’t become a real problem for me because already I knew that had to happen. I was resolved to taking care of it in that fashion because the moment I saw that \$800-something check, I knew that I had to do something to pick it up. I calculated fees that I was going to be getting, I calculated what I possibly could get by selling a condominium or two and some stocks that I had. I kind of calculated what my financial future for the next four years was going to be.

WN: In addition to the economic issue, another would be conflict of interest. Right? That’s partly one of the reasons why . . .

GA: That’s right.

WN: You gave up directorships.

GA: I felt that I did not want to be in a situation where, if by chance, I had to do something that affected the companies that I had shares in. I did not want to be in a situation where I had to think about what to do. To me it was better from the very beginning, soon as I stepped in, knowing that these are substantial companies, that they were going to be involved in affairs of the community that affect one bill or another, I ought to take the steps to avoid the possibility of that kind of conflict.

WN: Were there business people that you knew who advised you on such matters?

GA: No. It was something I just felt I had to do. As soon as I got elected, immediately, I resigned from all my directorships. That was even before I knew what my paycheck was going to be. My paycheck, \$32,000 or thereabouts, you’re talking about almost \$3,000 a month, so half a paycheck could be almost \$1,500. At \$1,500, not bad. I could have managed, but when it came out to \$800, wow.

(Laughter)

TC: Mrs. Ariyoshi was an amazing first lady. She became a great campaigner for you. Can you talk about that?

GA: Bob Oshiro felt that my first responsibility, when I became lieutenant governor, running for governorship, and after I became governor, my second campaign especially, he felt that my first responsibility was to my job. I had to do, and continue to do, a good job. I cannot shirk that and give it up in the name of wanting to be reelected. He made it very clear to me that he did not expect for me to take time off from my work and that I should be concentrating on my work. But the campaigning has to go on and somebody has to go sell the Ariyoshi name. Jean was called and Bob Oshiro asked Jeanie if she would go to neighbor islands. She went to the neighbor islands about nine months before the campaign got under way.

Bob wanted her to go and not talk issues, not talk about me, just go and become friends with people. She had coffee hours. Oh, she had two or three a day. Each coffee hour maybe she had four [people], five, sometimes bigger. They were not looking to have large coffee hours. She wanted to go and spend time and get to know the person. She never talked very much about me but it was getting to know the people. When I went to neighbor islands after that, and people would come to me, they would not ask me how I was, but they would say, "Is Jeanie here? How is she?" (Laughs) She had a knack of campaigning. People used to tell me they met Jeanie for the first time, and they feel as though they've been long friends. She has a knack of making people very comfortable. I don't have that ability.

For me, I'm kind of shy when I meet people. When I go to a function I stand off on one side. Somebody has to come and take me around, otherwise I just stand in one spot. But Jeanie was very natural. She got along with people. She remembered faces, remembered names. She was a big, big help to me. So during that period when she was going out, I didn't have to work with the campaign. All the persons she talked to, a large portion, majority of the people she talked to, all became campaign workers.

TC: I had a conversation with her in which I was just amazed by her memory. She would remember social situations or conversations that had happened several years before, details. I was kind of astonished.

GA: She remembers names and she remembers faces, too. Me, just the other day, she said, "You remember?"

"No, I don't remember the person."

(Laughter)

She tried to explain who that person was. I looked at the person, then I recognized. But to myself, [I thought] how could she remember that person? That person's face has changed so much.

WN: Would you say that she was basically an apolitical person in terms of parties? Was she the same with Republicans as she was with Democrats?

GA: Yeah. During the campaign, they asked at the national governors' level, they asked some governors if they would be part of that video they were going to put together for the campaign. I remember several of the governors talking about Jean Ariyoshi. One of them said very clearly, "Governor Ariyoshi is very popular and respected amongst all the governors of the United States but there is one person who is more greatly respected. That person is Jean Ariyoshi." (Chuckles)

WN: Wow (chuckles).

MK: So, regardless of party.

GA: Uh-huh. Even the president, when we met at the White House—you go through a line meeting the president, all the governors and their wives. They all remember, very kind towards Jeanie. They take time to talk to her. Then and after they go through the lines.

MK: So she really made an impression.

GA: Yeah.

WN: In retrospect, knowing what you've gone through—I guess I'll ask you a loaded question. Do you think she would have made a good politician?

GA: I don't know. You know, being a politician I think is two things: number one, being able to get along and liking people and liking that kind of setup; the other part is the responsibility and the work. I'm not sure Jeanie would have enjoyed that part of it.

Prime minister Prem Tinsulanond was the longest serving prime minister of Thailand. He came to Hawai'i. We only spent one night with him. We had him over for dinner, small dinner we had at the house. Next time, Jean and I went to Thailand and they told us to be sure to let them know we were coming. When we went to see Tinsulanond he was seated in a big room. As soon as I walked in the door, he stood up and came walking towards us and we met and he embraced me, which was a very rare thing to see in Bangkok. Then, his first words to me were, "It's so nice to have you." He told me, "We don't get to see each other very often, but that's not what friendship is all about. It's not about how often you see a person. It's about how you feel towards the person. I want you to know that I feel you're my friend." I thought to myself later on, how could that be so? I only met him one night. But Jeanie, Jeanie made him feel so comfortable, so good at the house at dinner, that he felt very warm towards Jeanie but also towards me.

TC: Let me ask something in this vein. When you went through this storm on the Maryland Land Bill, you turned to coffee hours, many small group interactions. You talk about Mrs. Ariyoshi going to the neighbor islands and the goal was just to become acquainted. You talk about Thailand. The connecting thread of those is simply the importance of acquaintance, of getting to know people. The more that I've lived in Hawai'i, the more I think that's almost like the core organizing value in Hawai'i, the importance of really just getting to know a person before you try to do anything else more complicated. I wonder if you could just talk about that because you refer to it over and over in many different stories that you tell, Governor.

GA: I think it comes down to friendship. At every level, friendship is very important. Some people will develop a long, meaningful, working relationship. Others, very casual, short period of time, but it's how you feel towards another. That's very, very important. I think it's more up to the person who is higher ranking to show that friendliness, seek that friendship. I've always said, in order to have a friend, you have to be a friend. I think that's what it is. It's easy for a person of higher level or rank to express, show that friendship, to another person than it is vice versa. When that friendship is shown, I think there's a tremendous response. I think that's true especially here in our community in Hawai'i.

That's why I talk about diversity, how diversity separates people elsewhere. But in Hawai'i, diversity does not separate us because of a very strong bond. That bond comes about because people—one group acknowledges the other group, person, that's there. And respect, even though that person may be very different. I think that's what is the basis for friendship here in Hawai'i. That's why I feel that in terms of our leaders getting the university professors—every time we have some opening, we got to go outside. We look for a person who's qualified. We forget one important element of work, is people getting to know, getting along, understanding what the other person is all about here in Hawai'i. That's the friendship part. I think that's what somebody from the outside cannot really understand and has difficulty accepting that. They eventually come about but who with whom? Only high-ranking people they establish a friendship. But the average person is hard for that friendship to come about. That to me is so important.

MK: When I first read your autobiography, the term *okagesama de* is mentioned throughout. To be totally honest, in the beginning I thought (sighs), *okagesama de* is always mentioned, but what I'm seeing as we go through the interviews, is that you seem to have a very—you really do embrace what *okagesama de* means and implicit in that *okagesama de* is that understanding that we are all connected, yeah?

GA: Mm-hmm.

MK: I think I just came to understand that.

GA: (Chuckles) Yes.

MK: And through your actions.

GA: Yeah. We're all connected and we all have to, when we meet someone, no matter what the ranking may be. You've got to come down to equal ranking and make people feel very comfortable, that you're not talking to a governor, you're not looking up to a governor, you're talking to a human being. I have the same human needs as you do. I got to eat. I got to rest. I need exercise. I need to take care of myself the same way that you have to take. Now we're on a common level. That's what, to me, is very, very important about human relationships.

I think some of that has rubbed off. I'm happy to say rubbed off on my children, some to a greater degree and some more or less. Donn, for example—Donn is my youngest—he meets a person for the first time and they all feel they've known Donn for a long time, he's a long-time friend. Because I think that's what it is, he accepts everybody.

Like Jean, sometimes I don't know how she's able to do it. I did not meet the Queen of Thailand the first time. It was not me, but Jeanie met her. I'm not sure how she met her. (Chuckles) I've got to ask her. But, we've been invited by the queen to a lot of her functions—not been invited, but after I left the governor's office, she provided transportation for us to get to the functions that she invites us to.

Zhao Ziyang, who was the premier of China, at the time that we were governor, and he was a person who when they had the Tiananmen Square, the student rally, he sided with the students. He got arrested, placed under house arrest. Zhao Ziyang, when he came to Hawai'i, he was very candid in how he spoke, and he talked about how people worked and how some people don't deserve to be taken care of. They don't work so hard. So I told him, "That's our system. That's the private enterprise system. People work and are rewarded on the basis of how hard they work."

So he said, "Well, that's our system too." But that's what he feels very strongly about. Then he had a good time. He had a good dinner.

After he went home, about six months or one year later, the president of China was coming through for a visit. So we were going to have a dinner, do something for him. So our people asked, "What do you like to do when you're in Hawai'i?"

His answer was, "I want the same kind of dinner that Zhao Ziyang got." All of that was Jeanie's work. I had nothing to do with the dinner. She put it together. The atmosphere that prevailed at the dinner, that made Zhao Ziyang go home—he went home and talked about, "Oh, what a fabulous dinner." He remembered what a nice dinner it was, so much that a president coming to Hawai'i later on says, "I want to have the same kind of dinner."

TC: We're talking about very interesting themes of friendship relationships. Would you tell to Michi and Warren the story of when you were in Japan? We're jumping forward. There was this remarkable story of you're asked to speak to the occasion where the emperor was there and you were supposed to stick to a text, and you were supposed to be translated, and you completely went in another direction by meeting a Brazilian of Japanese ancestry, if I remember the story right. I think this story connects to this subject that we're on.

GA: It was a function where we were greeting many overseas Japanese coming back from Brazil, from Hawai'i, from United States, and other parts of the world. Shintaro Abe, who was foreign minister at the time, Shintaro Abe asked me, "Could you come to this function and could you speak, because I think your speaking would be very important because you're like the rest of them? I think it would really be very important to come and speak."

So I agreed to do that. But he told me that the crown prince was going to be there, Crown Prince [Akihito] and [Princess] Michiko, and it was therefore very important that I speak in English and I have a translator. I have to give a speech prepared in time, in writing, which I told him, "I don't do that very often."

But he said, “You got to do this this time so that she can translate so there will be no mistake in the translation.” So I did have [a prepared speech]—I don’t even remember the speech that I prepared—what I was going to say.

When I got there and I was circulating with the people who were from—Japanese, overseas. I met this one Brazilian person. He was an older man. I asked him, “What generation are you?” He told me that he’s Brazilian. So I looked at him. His face is Japanese. I told him, “Oh, but you’re Japanese.”

He said, “I’m Brazilian.” I was really shocked by that.

I asked somebody, “That man over there, I asked him what generation he is, Japanese he is, and he told me that’s he’s Brazilian!” I said, “I don’t understand. He has a Japanese face.”

They told me, “You have to understand that during the war years, Japanese that were—Japanese were treated very harshly.” So many Japanese tried to say they were not Japanese and become—act like they were somebody else. They have a hard time saying they’re somebody else, that they’re not Brazilian. So I thought about that. I felt very badly for him. So when I was called upon to speak, the translator came up, interpreter, and I told her I didn’t need her. My Japanese is not very good but I wanted to speak in a way so that he can understand what I’m trying to say.

The nature of my speech was: My parents came from Fukuoka and Kumamoto and I’m Japanese American, second generation. I felt that I had opportunity to come to Japan [as part of the occupation forces] and I saw a country in ruin and a country defeated by war. I told about the boy, [a selfless, hardworking shoeshine boy], youngsters I had met, and I learned about the spirit of the Japanese. As I came back here, fifteen years later, and I looked at what had happened to Japan, I was amazed at the progress that had been made, a defeated country having made that kind of recovery. I asked myself, “How did this happen?” Yes, American help was very vital and they made it happen. But it happened because of the Japanese people, themselves; it’s for their country and they decided they’re going to do everything they can to help the country recover. They put in the time necessary to make it possible for the country to recover. So the economic recovery, fifteen years later, to me is an economic miracle. It happened because of the people. People like all of your parents who were there, who were Japanese, that’s the spirit that made it possible for Japan to recover. That same spirit I know that exists in each of you who are out there because that’s what you were taught to do. I hope each of you will understand that having the same blood, they have the same spirit that you can endure any hardship that you may come across in the future. You can say if they did it, my parents, my other generation did it, I too can do the same things no matter what the difficulties may be. That’s the future that you must carve out for yourselves.

I turned to the man. I looked at the man and I saw tears coming down. When I saw that, I thought to myself, oh, I achieved what I wanted to achieve. I touched that man and he’s going to be okay. He’s going to be willing to say that he’s Japanese at some point.

Jeanie was telling me the crown prince wanted to know what in the world, whether I was reading something or (chuckles). But I talked to Shintaro Abe after. Shintaro Abe told

me, “Governor, *arigato*.” He thanked me. He felt that I really did more than what he wanted me to do by being there, being a successful Japanese American overseas.

TC: This is a tangent but your story also awakens the progression of Japanese history. I did have some little questions that I wanted to ask in terms of how you saw it. You grew up in a very Japanese neighborhood in Hawai‘i, then you saw Japan at the very bottom of things at the end of the war, the beginning of the occupation. Then you went back and you describe the vitality. There were several other markers in terms of the contemporary history of Japan I think would be important to touch on. One, I think was really like the 1971–’72, ’73, first wave of big Japanese investment overseas and turning to Hawai‘i. You know, we’ve talked about your role in terms of Japan-Hawai‘i Economic Council and getting those relationships going and how important the relationships are, but you also played a role in helping define investment and how you saw it. I think it’d be important to talk about that at least a little bit.

GA: You see the Japan-Hawai‘i Economic Council—and I was lieutenant governor at that time. Governor Burns asked me if I would lead that group going to Japan. That was a trade mission, group of Hawai‘i business going to Japan, meeting with counterparts in Japan. As a result of that meeting, Japan-Hawai‘i Economic Council was formed subsequently. For me, it was my desire to have Japanese open up investments coming to Hawai‘i, because you cannot talk only about visiting, you wanted to be sure that you enjoyed some of the profits, benefits, of that visit too. And, be sure that we would enjoy the benefit of businesses from Japan coming and doing business here in Hawai‘i; we learned from them to get to be better businesses. I was also very concerned that we get the right kind of businesses. By “right kind” I mean the very conscientious, the people who were really typical, good Japanese people, coming and doing business.

I remember Takahiro Watanabe and I’d be having conversations in this connection. He was with Mitsubishi real estate; he was head of the Japanese side. We talked about this, how important it is for us to have, not only investments coming to Hawai‘i, but the right kind and the right people. By right people, people who have the right frame of mind to help, have feelings for Hawai‘i and the things that we do here. Takahiro Watanabe told me that’s exactly what he had in mind also. He wanted to see Japan-Hawai‘i Economic Council promote business but be sure that we keep out the wrong kind of people coming to do business here in Hawai‘i. Over the years, especially in the early years, that played a very important role in being sure that we got the right kind of people coming to do business here in Hawai‘i.

TC: There was some negative reaction to the Japanese investment at that point.

GA: Because it came too fast.

TC: What was your feeling . . .

GA: I was no longer governor at the time that we started to pick up. It was during John Waihee’s early years that the investment from Japan really started to come out. That was heightened by . . .

- TC: It became a kind of flood at that point. That had this enormous amount of accumulated capital.
- GA: Right. What had happened was there were some people who had property, land in Japan. Mister Watanabe, for example, who had parking lots and the land was very, very valuable even without any improvement. So when he bought up the property, they were not that valuable but became very valuable. So we had landowners, people who owned land in Japan, but the very big factor was the value of the yen at the time I left the governor's office, was 250–260 a dollar. When John Waihee became governor, at that point, it came down to 140. So the people in Japan were saying wow, it's like getting a big discount, because where they had to spend 250 or 260 to buy property, now they could get the same property for 140 dollars. So that factor, plus the people who had property land are now in a position to really buy property here in Hawai'i.
- TC: Did you share any of the negative feeling about some of the investments that were made at that time or do you think it was merely sort of an aggregate effect?
- GA: No. I always talked, during my time, used the word carrying capacity a lot. Carrying capacity, in terms of our water, schools, roads, everything, we got to be sure we don't exceed our carrying capacity. I had a chance, mainly because I became head of Prince Resorts after that. Even when, head of Prince Resorts, . . .
- TC: Yoshiaki. . . .
- GA: Yoshiaki . . .
- TC: Tsutsumi.
- GA: Tsutsumi, yeah. He asked me if I would take over the Prince Resorts, I told him only under several conditions. Number one, that we understand that there's a limit to growth. As time goes along we have to be sure to grow to a certain extent. I wanted to be sure also, that we took care of our employees and that we don't, every time there's an opening, hire somebody who's established out there and bring them in. I felt it's very important to provide an opportunity to people within the ranks. "Eh, I can get up there if I work hard. I can get up; this company is going to let me do that." That's what I told Yoshiaki I wanted to do.
- He told me, "That's a very good idea. Do that." I told him that we have to be very careful about our carrying capacity. During that time, I spoke a lot about the carrying capacity, and John Waihee tried to put together a group of hotel people. It was more for the purpose of marketing, promoting tourism, but I used that opportunity to talk about: We have a responsibility to do everything we can to maximize the amount of people that come to Hawai'i, but we also have a responsibility to be sure in putting the facilities together, that we understand that we've got to be careful and we don't exceed what our carrying capacity ought to be.
- TC: Let me just push through and complete this discourse about Japan because you've really lived a lot of this history. In the point where they had generated this enormous amount of capital, there was a point where American analysts were computing the power of Japan,

the economic power, and just the energy pouring out of Japan, that it was this phenomenon which people groped to kind of like grasp. What is this, you know? The phrase became: Japan is number one. Which implied all sorts of things, some of which, within America, reflected a lot of insecurity et cetera. If you look back, how did you see this phenomenon? What was your take on this?

GA: I was not too concerned about where that money was coming from. I was more concerned about what that money did and the kind of things that they got involved in. If it was for the right purpose—we had a lot of condominiums being built. If it was the rightful purpose and provided opportunities for Hawai‘i’s people to benefit from it, I felt that’s okay. But I was never really too troubled by where that money was coming from. It was more my feeling, what do they do. They got to do the right things when they come to Hawai‘i.

I spoke to groups along that line. I had several Japanese groups that came and wanted to retain me. Every time they wanted to retain me and I agreed, I always told them about Hawai‘i’s carrying capacity, about how important it is for the monies to be used for the right kind of things. I made it very clear to them, that I accept but I’m going to be talking frequently if we do something that you want that’s not good, I’m going to tell you that I’m not in favor of it.

TC: Okay. One more phase. That is the Japan of the nineties, and also the critique that Japan continues to be a sort of stagnating society. What is your perception of that, those clichés, those generalizations?

GA: Well, I think you’ve got to look at why the stagnation. Number one, you look at how they got where they are. Then you’ve got to look at why they begin to come down. I think they got there because of the big business people who knew what to do. When I was in the army, assigned to anti-trust cartels, there was an opinion that says we’ve got to smash them, wipe them out completely so they’ll never come up. There were some of us who thought, wait, America wants them to recover very rapidly and if you wipe them all out, that kind of recovery is going to take a long time. What they ought to do instead is to break them up so they’re not one big unit, a very powerful unit. Break them up.

Today, if you look at Mitsubishi, they’re not one conglomerate. They’re all separate companies. They had people who know about the economy, what kind of thing they had to do to make it come up. You had people like Akio Morita of Sony, Masao Ibuka, who looked at this possibility of new technology that would make it possible for Japan to emerge. That’s how Japan became very large. What they did in that process was to get the people in Japan to come and work with them and work for the company and make them feel that the company is their company, not somebody else’s company. They wanted to make sure that they work hard to make the company succeed. That’s what made Japan, I think, become very strong. What’s turned around this time? I think it’s competition from outside, but a lot of it is internal.

When I met with Governor [Shintaro] Ishihara of Tokyo last year, Governor Ishihara told me that he feels that Japan is going off the wrong track. Japan is continuing to look—every time they want to do something, they look to big business. Big business is having a

hard time because competition and things are not happening as they wanted. That means they're trying to hang on but they can't hang on to everybody.

So the old lifetime employment kind of thing has changed. That no longer is there and people get laid off from work too. They don't hire as many as they used to. Young college graduates are not being hired in large numbers by them. They can go work for—not the large employers, but everybody wants to work for large employers and that's where they want to go.

Governor Ishihara told me he believes that Japan has changed, that you cannot look at big business. You've got to look at the entrepreneurs; you've got to look at brains that exist at small companies. The big business they didn't get there naturally. They got there because they had people who were smart, who were willing to go and work hard and come up with the ideas and innovation to make that company grow. But now Japan, big companies are not growing. They got to take advantage of the talent that they have, make them grow. Governor Ishihara told me he believes that if small business people, the individual entrepreneurs, are going to create innovation in a country and from there it's going to happen. I told him that's what happened to Silicon Valley.

In America, big companies—IBM was already there but Bill Gates's company, Microsoft, is not there. It was the entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley who grew, Apple—you name all the big companies today and they were entrepreneurs who made it possible. I told him additionally, in America—and I think it's true in the United States and Japan also that the large companies have a lot of red tape. If you want to start something, innovate, you get some people who may be very, very good and moving along, but every time they want to change, they got to go up to get approval. Down, down approval come to them. So it takes a long time for them to get to what they want to do. That's true in America also.

You think IBM, IBM is large, but they don't have the research capacities because they try to do the same kind of thing. They can't let the person to go free. So IBM acquires technology that is created by people on the outside. I told him, that, I think, is true with Japan too. He told me, "Absolutely. That's very true." I think that's what they have to do. Get away from thinking only that big companies can make things happen in Japan. Look to the young people, average individual, innovators and entrepreneurs and tell them, "You can make things happen in Japan." You can make things happen. Help the big companies also.

In addition to that, there's the problem of too many people, older people, relying on benefits they get now and less and less people who are working, young people, supporting older people. At that time I told Governor Ishihara, that today a person who is sixty or sixty-five years old is very different from a person who was sixty or sixty-five years old fifteen, twenty years ago. That person today, even though age-wise, chronologically, is older, is much younger, stronger, more active, more involved. Maybe that person is not ready to retire. That's what maybe Japan ought to do. Take those people, whatever your age bracket ask them, "Can you work for maybe two, three, four years?" So they become part of the working group instead of the receiving group. I think that those two things in my judgment, if I were a Japanese politician, that's what I would do.

- TC: That speaks to the big demography, you know, conversation about Japan, the aging population et cetera, but you're talking about the cultural shift and also just health care modes, exercise modes, dietary modes. I think that's very interesting. That was the last thing I really wanted to ask you about. I do want to go back—I'm sorry, I need to belabor this but it's so interesting. You said when you were at the NYK [Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha] building, I think it was, in Tokyo, in the occupation.
- GA: Across the Marunouchi building.
- TC: Right. You heard, you were involved at some low level, although you were a G.I. but a G.I. who spoke Japanese and English and you participated at some level and the basic debate over the future of Japan. Don't be too modest about it. I mean, what happened? How did you—you heard it going on and on some level you got involved.
- GA: Well, informal conversations we have among a group. Some people talking about, "You gotta smash 'em [conglomerates]." Obliterate them. Others saying, "Wait now, maybe we shouldn't go." I just happen to be talking to some of those people who have the same kind of ideas I did, that America wants Japan to make as rapid economic recovery as possible. That's our goal. If that's our goal, you've got to take away the bigness part that can result in abuses, but don't smash the ability of people, companies, to be able to come back up.
- TC: Don't destroy the production capacity.
- GA: Yeah. We didn't have one rule, somebody saying that's going to be the rule. But it was just moving along, doing things, people expressed their feelings. I was not there very long so I didn't make that kind of impact. But I was able to indicate my feelings.
- TC: Were there other Japanese Americans in this work group there, or were you the only one?
- GA: Not that I knew of. I never met anybody.
- TC: Were you the only person who spoke Japanese there in this setting?
- GA: No, I can't say that because there were some Caucasian people who spoke better Japanese than I did (chuckles).
- TC: Were they intelligence people? Were they missionary kids or what? Often the missionary kids were the Caucasian . . .
- GA: No. You know, the highest Japanese-language speaking people at Fort Snelling [Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS)] were a group of Caucasians who got volunteers, got routed there because they had language—some people, language can come easy for them; other people, math comes easily, science. People have aptitudes. I think that there was a group, *haole* people, who were at MIS [Language School], one company, wow, the way they spoke Japanese. They were not linguists before that, not Japanese linguists. They came and in a very short time, they became so good at Japanese, six months, nine months.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

TC: You've known many of the most remarkable figures in Japan, one of them was Akio Morita. For the purpose of the oral history, some people won't know, was the genius of Sony, making Sony. What were your relationships with them because you had a very nice relationship?

GA: Yeah. I was very close to Akio and whenever I went to Japan I visited him. After he got sick, he couldn't go back to his company to work for about one year. The first day he went back to work, he invited me to come to the house and I went to the house and visited, spent time with him. I still remember—you know, Jeanie used to make him laugh and she really responded to him. I remember talking about—I don't know how it all started about American movies and the movie *Cheaper by the Dozen* came out. All of a sudden I heard Akio say, "Ah, yeah. I remember that movie. It was *Cheaper by the Dozen*."

(Laughter)

Well, I guess she made him feel very natural. So even when we visited, when he was here, he would spend a lot of time with Jeanie. You could hear him laughing. Mrs. Morita would tell me, "Oh, only Jeanie makes him laugh like that."

TC: You had a significant relationship with the royal family, which is always complicated by protocols, et cetera, et cetera. Nonetheless, there's a kind of a long continuity. Did it begin with receiving and entertaining Hirohito in his trip to America not long after you became governor?

GA: Yeah, 1975.

TC: Is that the beginning point of the story?

GA: Yeah. But before that, before he came, the Japanese government asked me not to come to Japan—I got elected in 1974—and not to come to Japan until I received an official visit from the Japanese government to come. I received that official visit in August or September. Invitation came a little earlier, but it was for me to come in either August or September. I had to wear tails (chuckles).

TC: Received by the emperor.

GA: Received by the emperor.

TC: What was that like?

GA: It was a very formal, and yet kind of casual, meeting. Formal in the sense that I had to dress like that. See, we got to the Imperial Grounds and they took us to one place, we were waiting there. Then they took us to another place, and then we had to wait there, and from there they took us to meet the emperor. Before we met the emperor, somebody, protocol person briefed us and told us that we had twenty minutes, our meeting was twenty minutes. We had to be sure that we observed that twenty minutes and we didn't stay longer. They told us that I would be sitting on one side facing the emperor, and Jeanie would be facing the empress, close but not more than six feet or seven feet

separate. But after that conversation, I was worried (MK and GA chuckle.) because I was concerned about what kind of conversation. I didn't know how he was going to be conversing, what he's going to be talking to me about. But I let things go and we started to talk and I talked to him about surfing, and talked to him about what kind of things happened in Hawai'i. Then Jeanie and the empress started to have a very funny conversation because both of them were laughing. So every once in a while, the emperor would stop and turn around to look at what the empress was laughing about.

MK: What were you speaking in, English? Japanese?

GA: In English. They told me, better to speak in English and he would have an interpreter. I still remember the face of the interpreter. Fujiyama, I think the name was. I met him many times after that. He sat right next to the emperor. He interpreted, simultaneous interpreting, they're talking to him. They told me, better for me to speak in English because then I won't speak in lousy, insulting Japanese to the emperor. I would get my ideas expressed better to the emperor.

MK: To what extent did the emperor ask you any questions about your background, or your family?

GA: He knew about my background. He told me he understood I was from Fukuoka, my parents, and my mother. He wanted to know how long they had been in Hawai'i and whether I was born in Hawai'i. That kind of thing, was very personal kind of thing he started to ask. (Coughs) I was concerned about the twenty minutes. I thought about the twenty-minute time frame. But actually, we spent almost forty minutes with the emperor. I was told, how do I know when the twenty minutes are over? "Don't worry, you'll know." I'll get the cue. Nobody said anything and we kept on talking. So we had forty minutes with the emperor. I was told later on that was a very unusual thing to happen.

MK: In your conversation, how much of it was just personal and social versus kind of governmental?

GA: I think some social. I expressed to him at that time, my feelings about gratitude. He had expressed to General [Douglas] MacArthur his hope that MacArthur could do anything to him but would take care of the people. MacArthur was swayed by remarks from the emperor: "Do anything you want with me, but please take care of my people." That really touched him. That's when MacArthur felt Japanese have different kind of feelings. I expressed my appreciation for some of that kind of thoughts expressed by him. (Pause)

When he came to Hawai'i, for that visit—I don't know how they worked that out but my best recollection is that Jeanie sat in front there; emperor sat next to Jeanie, empress next to me, and then me. It was not my idea because if it had been, actually I, myself, next to the emperor. But that's how it worked out. As it worked out, I think it worked out very nicely because the empress and Jeanie got to talk about all kinds of things.

One of the things they talked about was pineapples: How does pineapple grow? Does it grow on a tree or plant? How do they grow? Jeanie told them, "It doesn't grow very high. Many pineapple come out of one plant." Because of the conversation she had, when we came out [of Washington Place], and we came side by side walking, Jeanie told the

emperor, “Oh, you have to come back again because you have to come back and see the pineapple plants.” And he laughed. That’s the only time I’ve seen him laugh.

Very unfortunately, all the cameras were on the other side of the car, on this side. If he had turned around that way, they would have gotten a picture that very rarely would have been seen of the emperor. He laughed. So I told Jeanie, “You make him laugh. I don’t know anybody who made him laugh like that.” Then he got down and instead of getting in the car, he waited and they opened the door and he let Kōjun [Empress] Nagako get in the car first. So I was very surprised that he did that.

When he returned to Japan, I was watching very carefully. At the airport, when he got home, a big ceremony was held for him, going to the car, the empress was walking behind him and he walked right into the car. (Chuckles) He was back in Japan. (MK and GA laugh.) But I thought that for him to do that—do as the Romans do when you’re in Rome. That’s what I thought about. I thought, gee he’s great for thinking about small things like that and then doing it.

MK: What did that visit mean to your mother?

GA: Oh, my mother was reluctant to stand in line over there. I said, “No, Mama. Please, I want you to be right next to me. I want you to meet the emperor and the empress.” Then I told her, “The emperor is probably going to come through, he’s going to shake my hand and shake everybody’s hand and he’s going to do that to everybody in line. When he shakes my hand, he’s going to come to you and he’s going to shake your hand too. You shake his hand. If he puts his hand out, you shake his hand. If not, you just keep your hands down.” Then when the emperor came through, the emperor had his hand out, my mother (chuckles) wouldn’t put her hand out. Slowly she put her hand out. But she never looked up. She said to shake his hands was something that she never dreamt she could ever do. Then she told me, when I told her, “Why didn’t you look at him?” She said, “I couldn’t get my head up. I wanted to see him. I wanted to but I just could not.” That’s the respect that people of her generation had for the emperor.

When the emperor came to Hawai‘i, at the airport, we arranged for people who were eighty years and older to be at the airport. We had a section, seats assigned to them. He was going to come at six o’clock. At two o’clock I got word that there were many of them who were seated out there already. So I told our people, “You go tell them, put them in the shade. It’s so hot. Take them in the shade.” But they told me that there were some Japanese who refused to give up their seats. They were seated from two o’clock until six o’clock in the hot sun. You know how hot the airport can be. No more grass. The tarmac, all the hot places, they stayed there. But the emperor came, I was to greet the emperor and introduce him to everybody.

The (American) protocol man—what’s his name now? Cato, (a Caucasian,) protocol man. Before the plane landed, twenty minutes before the plane landed, we had it all arranged that I was going to—emperor comes down—I was going to meet him at the ramp down there, meet him and then introduce him to every person there. Twenty minutes before it landed, we got word that the situation has changed. Mr. Cato is on the plane there. He’s going to come and he’s going to come down and he’s going to introduce everybody to the emperor. So I didn’t want to make a fuss. I let it go at that.

But the first thing he did, he met Spark Matsunaga. He met Patsy Mink. He introduced Patsy Mink and Mrs. Matsunaga.

(Laughter)

Patsy was really angry. Patsy Mink, you know. That's when I thought, "Good for him. He had no business trying to take over." He didn't know the people and he wanted to take it over. We had already arranged with the consul general that I was going to do this. But we went through the line anyway. Then after he went through the line, I had the Kamehameha Schools girls choir out there. Beyond that, I had a group of older people sitting down. Soon as he met everybody, Cato said, "Okay, let's go."

I told him, "Go where?"

He said, "The car is waiting for him."

I thought, no. "Mr. Cato," I said, "We have some program planned out there."

He told me, "No. We're ready to go."

So I told him, "Mr. Cato, you are in Hawai'i now. I'm the governor of Hawai'i and I'm taking over." And I took it over. I said, "The people out there, over eighty years of age, and they're all waiting from two o'clock this afternoon, sitting out there. Can we just walk over there?"

So he told me, "He'd be very happy to go over there." So he [the emperor] walked and I looked and I was walking behind him. I let him walk up front. Every head was up like this. When he got closer, not right in front, but as he got closer, every head went down. Not a single head stood up to look when he came in front. I looked and I could see tears coming down. I know the emperor saw that too. I know that he was very touched by what he saw. After that, I told him—the group, Kamehameha Schools, the girls, only one number they sang for him. Then they raced him off. I was very firm with Mr. Cato. I was not going to let him take the emperor away. I just told him—I don't normally say that! I don't normally, "Eh, I'm governor. I'm number one here." But in this case, I had to tell him that to let him know that I'm in charge of the state and I'm going to take charge. "I'm not going to let you run this thing."

TC: What do you think the older generation people, who were there, sat for four hours, what do you think their view of the emperor was?

GA: Emperor was *kamisama*, God. Can you call Kay to bring a picture? Ask Kay to come. I just want to show you something.

MK: Okay.

GA: Have Kay come. (WN leaves room.)

MK: That is something, yeah?

GA: Kay. You remember the pictures I have over there? One of those pictures—may I have Mrs. . . . what's her name?

Kay: The lady from Hilo?

GA: Yeah, Hilo. Can you bring that picture for me please? I want to show you this picture because you mentioned how did they feel respect for the emperor. I think the Japanese, older Japanese, that generation, they have a way of showing their respect. I was at a function at the state capitol. I was seated and this lady from Kona, she came in front of me and she bowed. I was so touched. Her whole feelings came out to me, that feeling of respect, that same kind of respect that people have. My mother saying she cannot look at the emperor. She cannot touch the emperor's hand.

MK: That is something, yeah?

GA: All those people, from two o'clock in the hot sun, waiting to see him, and not seeing him except from a distance. Not seeing him when they came close by.

MK: Had they lived in Japan, they'd never, never have that kind of opportunity.

GA: They could never get that close.

MK: Yeah.

GA: I had people tell me after that, they were so grateful that I thought about inviting them to come and sit and greet the emperor because they felt they had come and really greeted the emperor in their own way.

MK: When you were going to Japanese-language school, was there a picture of the emperor in your Japanese-language classroom?

GA: I don't recall. (Shows picture.) You see this lady, not only bowing, just look at her whole body and how. . . .

WN: This is the same, at the airport?

MK: No, no, no.

GA: No. This is at the state capitol.

WN: Oh, okay.

GA: But every time we went to Kona, she came to see me.

MK: What was her name? We can ask Kay. She would come to see you every time you went up.

GA: I'm terrible at names.

MK: But that bow, her whole body is expressing that.

GA: Holding my hand, you know, I could just feel everything coming through.

MK: And you're reacting to her too. I look at that picture.

GA: I've got to get her name. I know her name. I met her son, Chester something, recently.

WN: Not Kanetake? Chester . . .

GA: Kunitake. Kunitake.

MK: Kunitake, oh.

WN: Chester was with HGEA [Hawai'i Government Employees Association], I think.

GA: Yeah, that's right.

WN: Okay, Kunitake.

MK: Mrs. [Kiyono] Kunitake was involved in community issues in Kona.

GA: You know the Kona airport, the old airport, when they closed that and got the new airport, she felt that the airport owned by the state could be used for so many things, actively used by the people of Kona. We should not turn it over to airport development. She came to me, and I talked to her many times about that.

MK: She was an activist.

GA: Yeah. So we had ball field, you know baseball/football field worked out over there. She was really happy that I did not turn it over for commercial development.

MK: We met Mrs. Kunitake in 1980 when we were doing an oral history project in Kona. She was already known as a real active community member.

TC: This same lady.

MK: Same lady, Mrs. Kunitake.

TC: That's amazing.

MK: She also gave us some historical photos, or what became historical photos.

GA: The other thing she always used to do when she met me, she gave me a lei made of coins, quarters.

(Laughter)

Looking to see whether or not . . .

MK: She always had her hair that way. Mrs. Kunitake! That's a very special lady.

GA: Oh, yes.

MK: Very special.

TC: I'm thinking about your story on a new level in light of my obsession with the wartime. Just to toss out a couple of things for perspective, to see, provoke, a comment on your part. Bicknell said the problem with American intelligence is they can't grasp that the issei, the average issei, may think the emperor is divine, but nonetheless, they are not a threat to America. This is not a threat to America. So (chuckles) Americans couldn't deal with that idea. That was one perspective. [Shigeo] Yoshida's perspective was to destroy. He wanted to destroy the link. He wanted to break the link. So he engaged in . . .

GA: The link of what?

TC: The link of the issei to the emperor. He engaged in ridicule of the emperor. His words were something like, the preposterous notion that this person was the embodiment of a 2,600-year-old nation, et cetera, et cetera. The person you admired, Yoshida, had a desire to break the link. Just---this is ludicrous. You, in receiving—you were the link to reestablishing the relationship within America of the emperor. Really, right? I mean MacArthur had his famous relationship with the emperor in Japan but that was his first time travelling to America.

GA: Mm-hmm, in '75.

TC: Yeah. In essence, your bridge between him and the elder people who were waiting, by your presence, you're saying, this respect is perfectly natural. You know?

GA: Yeah.

TC: Very interesting.

GA: You see, I think that it's very important not to destroy links between people, whatever they may be. This link between the people, the elderly people, and what they felt about the emperor was very important to them. I think it's one of the reasons why today we see Japanese names [in the news], somebody commit a crime, Japanese names, but back in those days, very seldom did you see a Japanese name, person committing a crime. When you saw that, the whole community felt that's terrible for this person to do whatever they did. I think sometimes linkages help in serving other purposes. I think the link with the emperor served the purpose of preserving cultural lines, practices, and understanding cultures. I wish I had known that when Mr. Yoshida was active but I was too young to talk to him like that.

MK: You had two questions you wanted to ask.

TC: Yeah. I think that's it. (Laughs) I'll stop. This is a hugely interesting . . .

MK: You've got your two questions?

TC: Yeah, the relationship with these extraordinary business figures and also with the emperor, the royal family. There is one—we talked about [Akio] Morita. Morita became

very famous in the West. You sort of breezed past Yoshiaki Tsutsumi but I don't know if you know, Yoshiaki Tsutsumi was—and his brother—was in contemporary Japan among the most amazing figures. At one point, Yoshiaki Tsutsumi was described, often described, as the richest person in the world. Governor was very closely acquainted with him. Worked with him very closely. Advised him about their relationship with Hawai'i their relationship with America.

GA: I was so close to him that I was one of the few people who could disagree with him. I went to some of the meetings. Seibu Railway, Prince Hotels, construction, and all kinds of companies there. I attended several of those meetings. Yoshiaki sits on a big table in the front, and everybody else sits on the side over there. They talk and he is very expressive of his feelings. Nobody disagrees with him. I know when there were some things that they wanted to take up with Yoshiaki and they went to see him for that purpose, and before they started talking, if he expressed some controversial opinions about what they were talking about, immediately they stopped and they went along with him. I told Yoshiaki, "The best thing that I really feel very bad about your company is that everybody agrees with you and nobody is willing to say something different. My organization, when I was governor, had all cabinet people. I never accepted them agreeing with me all the time. I wanted them to tell me something that was different because that way you understand and you can make things better." Yoshiaki had that kind of power.

In fact, at the Mauna Kea Hotel there was an area, little higher, lawn area, and then you come down like this down here and the beach was over there. There's a creek that runs down here. Sometimes there used to be functions from the hotel up in that upper area, cocktail parties. In order for them to get there they had to go walk out that way. I wanted a bridge to walk going across there. I couldn't get the local people to do that and I told them, "How come?" They got to get permission from Yoshiaki. I said, "Why don't you get permission from him? Because this is a very natural thing for us to do." All our guests, they got to go take this long walk around there and come down that way. I told them, "It's not good. It's not right."

So they told me they got to get Yoshiaki's permission. "Not, we couldn't get permission."

So one day, I was riding in the car with him in Japan and I told him about this bridge. "It's very important. We're insulting our guests when they got to go up there, when a simple bridge would go across there. And it's not an expensive bridge. It's a walkway, not automobile."

He told me, "Oh, you think it's a good idea?"

I told him, "Not only a good idea, but to me it's absolutely essential. That's what we have to do for the customer."

He said, "Okay then let's do it."

Nobody could get him to agree to it because they're all afraid and I don't believe they took it up with him. I don't think they went to him and told him. Before they [Hawai'i

Prince Hotel in Waikīkī] opened, Jeanie went to visit and Jeanie came back and she told me, “Eh, the color’s terrible!” They had pineapple designs but everything was dark. You don’t think you’re in Hawai‘i. Dark brown, you know. So she told me it’s terrible. She told me, “I’m going to tell Yoshiaki that.” She mentioned it to Yoshiaki and they changed everything. (MK chuckles.) They changed the colors.

Yoshiaki asked her to come to Tokyo. The Akasaka Prince Hotel newly opened he told Jeanie, his wife Yuri, “Please go to every part of this hotel. Go to every room, every floor. Go to every restaurant. Eat and look and come back with thoughts.” And that’s what Jeanie did. She told Yoshiaki, “You don’t feel comfortable. Everything is so formal. You got to make it so people feel more open, feel free to relax.” So Yoshiaki wanted to get Jeanie’s ideas.

TC: This is a terrifically interesting cultural story to me because you’re the Americans. (Chuckles) You know? You’re putting a face of American cultural attitude, a free—first of all it’s a free conversation of a female to Tsutsumi. I read this biography of him. He was a baron. He was a . . .

GA: No.

TC: . . . and so you talk to him in the spirit of equality, underlying equality, human beings underlying equality, not only yourself but Mrs. Ariyoshi. It’s a cultural-bridge story.

GA: Yeah. You see, Tsutsumi also got in trouble a few years ago, and they felt that he had run the company in very authoritarian ways and done things that maybe he shouldn’t have done. So they brought a criminal action against him. After they did that, I’ve never seen him. Jeanie has seen Yuri, his wife, many times. They’ve gone to dinner, lunch and dinner. I’ve met with Yuri. But I told Yuri, at the appropriate time, I’d like to see Yoshiaki. She said, “No.” Whatever might have happened in Japan, I have great respect for him as a person, as a business person, and how he makes decisions for the hotel. Things that went wrong were sometimes not his fault. That’s a problem when you have many people, going along with everything, not saying we shouldn’t be doing this. So I told Yuri that I wanted to meet with Yoshiaki at some point, when he feels comfortable.

Yuri told me, “That’s very kind of you to do that, but now is not the time. Yoshiaki needs to take time to really get over everything that has happened. He’s beginning to spend a lot more time with his grandchildren.”

I told her, “Please let me know when you think he’s ready for me to visit with him.” For him, I think, a visit with him and his feeling that I came to see him is too hard. I understand the problem that he’s having and for me to know those problems, I think he feels kind of embarrassed. I think that’s why he’s not ready. He doesn’t want to see me.

He had a dinner for me once in Hawai‘i. It was at a home that he had just bought recently at Hawai‘i Kai side, just passed Wai‘alae. He came to invite me to a dinner and he asked me if I could bring a couple of people. So I told him, “I want you to meet my younger brother.” He said okay. I want you to meet—Joan Bickson was Jeanie’s close friend. Joan Bickson, we got along close together. I told him I wanted the Bicksons to be invited. Very good. So that was the group. Jeanie, me, two, four, six, plus him. I don’t know

whether Yuri came. It was at his home. For that dinner he brought three chefs from Japan. He had difficulty getting approval, visa for these three chefs because chefs, that's their job and they're going to come and they're going to do cooking here in Hawai'i. The American side, they were reluctant to let them get visas to come to Hawai'i.

I talked to [Mike] Mansfield about this. Mansfield said he'll check to see what he could do. But in the meantime, Yoshiaki arranged for them not to come directly but they went the other way. They could find it easily to come to Hawai'i. So they went to Europe and from Europe came to Hawai'i. Three chefs came only for the purpose of having that one dinner, cooking one dinner for us.

TC: Did you know the brother as well? I can't remember the brother's name.

GA: He had two brothers. Seiji was the older one. Yoshiaki had all of it, everything, Seibu, the hotels, the land, railroads. He had everything. The only thing that Seiji got, was a part of Seibu Department Store.

TC: Seibu Department Store.

GA: Yeah, Seibu Department Store. Yoshiaki told me, "Some people think that I don't get along with my brother, but I try to help him when I can." One time they tried to help him was when Japan was going to get—they had only seven television stations at that time, channels. They were going to increase, BS [Broadcasting Satellites] they call it. At that time, Yoshiaki's brother had one of the channels and they had the antenna on the roof. Yoshiaki told me his brother wanted help, for him to get involved in that, with that television group. I told Yoshiaki, I said, "No, Yoshiaki. Don't do that because that antenna is on the roof. If you get the BS system, you can get stronger transmission and you don't have to go through the roof." What Seiji had was going through the roof, antenna up there.

So he told me, "*Arigato*." He told me, "How do you know this kind of things?"

Because the ministry of transportation came to me and asked me for my opinion on what they should be doing with these BS stations.

TC: Interesting.

MK: I had a question. Your mother expressed so much reverence for the emperor. She's issei but long settled in Hawai'i. I know that later on she got American citizenship.

GA: She did not get American. She never became . . .

MK: She never became an American citizen?

GA: No. She never became an American citizen. My father never became an American citizen either.

MK: I just assumed that they did! They never?

GA: No.

MK: So what you arranged for them following the war was legal residence. For your father it was legal residency?

GA: Right. That's right.

MK: But never citizenship.

GA: No.

MK: Oh, I just assumed that they had been part of the issei group that went for American citizenship.

GA: My father could sign his name. My father understood ABC. He could recite the English alphabet. He could write, get words written out. My mother could not. My father used to sign in English, Ryoza Ariyoshi. He could sign that. Very proud he could do that. My mother could not. So he tried teaching my mother how to sign her name, Mitsue Ariyoshi (chuckles). He would laugh. My mother could not even sign Mitsue Ariyoshi properly. When she did sign it, it was not very good writing.

MK: So you had to establish legal residency for him. Neither ever became American citizens. Had they ever considered it at the time when others were switching?

GA: No. I think in a way because they were so busy. They could never consider anything like that until I came back from law school in '52 and got them long-term residency. They travelled to Japan and I guess they didn't feel that was necessary for them to become American citizens at that point.

WN: So they could never vote for you.

GA: That's right.

(Laughter)

Well, you know, Jeanie couldn't vote for me in my first election in 1954.

WN: That's right (chuckles). You said that.

(Laughter)

GA: In the primary she couldn't. She was okay in the general.

MK: So more so, since your mother never became an American citizen, for her to have met the emperor. Wow.

GA: Uh-huh. But when I think about the emperor's visit, and the reception at the American Embassy, it's amazing how, moving around, very few people wanted to shake his hand.

The current emperor, when he came to America and he came to Hawai'i . . . I think it was in the nineties, early nineties. [Bill] Clinton was still the president. They had a big reception. Jeanie and I were invited to the reception, the dinner. And he came to Hawai'i

- and moving around, very different from the emperor's visit in '75. The emperor's visit in '75, everybody just stood at attention when they came by. In the 1990s, there was a number of people who wanted to shake his hand and took hands out. I remember [sumo champion] Akebono's mother was there. Oh, she wanted to shake the emperor's hand and hug him. I'm sure the other Japanese felt embarrassed by what she was doing to the emperor.
- MK: You've seen the different changes, yeah? In terms of how people react to imperial household.
- GA: Mm-hmm. The timing I think is very important. In 1975 when the first emperor came, Hirohito, and from '96 until 2004 when it was Clinton's time, big changes. When Akihito current emperor came, the kind of reaction, the way people responded, very different from the way people responded to Hirohito. Both of respect, but one is respect like this [bowing], you know? Others, several years later, people, not everybody, but some people sticking hands out, shaking hands.
- MK: Generational difference, yeah?
- GA: Mm-hmm.
- MK: Earlier, we were talking about the infusion of Japanese investments here in the islands. That was a time of tremendous growth, a lot of real estate developments. When I've read some things about your administration, you were not for no growth but you were for slower, little bit slower growth.
- GA: Mm-hmm. Yeah.
- MK: What made you go that route?
- GA: Appropriate growth. Well, you see when Hawai'i became a state, 1959, and I became governor 15 years later, 1974, I looked at what had happened during that period. I saw, in 1952, the population was 630,000 people. By the time I became governor, 15 years later, it was 854,000 people. That represented a growth of approximately 2.5 percent over that 15-year period, compared to the national rate of growth of .08 percent. So Hawai'i, during that growth period, was growing 3 times the growth rate of the Mainland. I thought to myself, other states are contiguous so they can grow into the next state but here, we have the ocean that surrounds us. So you can't grow into the ocean. Everything has to be within the state boundary. I became very concerned what that would mean in terms of the housing we had to create, the roads that we had to get, the education facilities, all the health facilities, everything else we need to do to take care of people, great increases that were taking place. So I became very concerned about the need for us to be able to bring about some slowing down of the growth. That made me feel very strong. That's really what made me feel that we had to have a plan. We had to look ahead, find ways in which we can moderate the things that are happening in our community. Try to achieve the kind of Hawai'i that we want to have Hawai'i become. So that the state plan was in part a result of that kind of thinking.

MK: You were saying that you wanted to achieve the Hawai‘i that you wanted it to be. What was in your mind, the Hawai‘i that you felt we should be working toward?

GA: I think slowing down the rate of the population growth because we could not continue to grow that fast. We don’t have the land to provide all the housing for people so that became a great concern for me. In terms of the economy, part of that growth was the result of many outside people coming and starting to do business. I felt we can be very selective in the kind of things that we come to do. So part of my slow growth was the question of what kind of growth, what type of a growth that we have here in the community. And we talked about appropriate growth. People asked, “What about appropriate growth?”

I told them, “I don’t know. You figure that out yourself. You think about this Hawai‘i, because it’s not my Hawai‘i alone. I’m talking about the whole Hawai‘i. I can tell you what I want to see. I want the population growth to slow down. I want more agricultural lands to be saved and more agriculture. I want us to go into aquaculture. I want us to do more renewable energy rather than reliance on oil. I wanted us to preserve and save our parks so that it would be more readily available for our people. These are the kind of things I feel very strongly about Hawai‘i.”

So when people ask me, “What do you think appropriate growth?”

“You got to think about what’s appropriate. It’s your Hawai‘i too. It’s not me to design Hawai‘i for you.” That’s why I had so many people working on the state plan, functional plans.

MK: That was supposed to be our blueprint for the future.

GA: Mm-hmm. When I think about the regional plan, people telling me, “You can’t predict the future and you can’t pay for half the plan like that.”

My response today would be, “Take a look at what happened to the windward side.” There we had a regional plan, windward regional plan, and we talked about keeping it relatively undeveloped, in agriculture. We bought properties Joe Pao was going to subdivide. Mark’s Estate, [McCandless Estate, inherited by Elizabeth Marks] we bought that property. So I tell people, “Look at the Windward regional plan today.” We wanted that area to be kept relatively undeveloped so that people in the future, with all the growth that takes place, can know what old Hawai‘i was all about. You look at Waiāhole now, you look at Sacred Falls, 1,500 large chunks, acreage, we bought over there, Mālaekahana Bay Park. What we did to buy property there, save that park. You go on the other side. It was on the Hale‘iwa side. So we went, concentrated on the windward side but also I thought . . .

TC: Kaiaka?

MK: Kaiaka.

GA: Kaiaka (Point). We had to buy that property also.

MK: What made you do that? That was pretty gutsy to use state funds to buy Mark's Estate and to buy other areas. What made you do that?

TC: Waiāhole Valley.

MK: Yeah! What made you do that?

GA: Because if we didn't do that, Waiāhole Valley was going to be developed. And Joe Pao was ready, had subdivision plans for that place. I felt very strongly that it ought to remain in agriculture. The farmers there should be contented to have that land for that purpose. My view was that we should have tourism and they should be located in the Waikīkī area. And from here, all the tourists go out they can see a nice Hawai'i, not a developed Hawai'i. [There were] development plans for the 1,500 acres of Sacred Falls, and when I saw that, I felt we can't have this kind of development. We got to save that for Hawai'i's people so future generations will know Sacred Falls. So we stepped in and bought 1,490 acres of Sacred Falls.

TC: Could you tell Michi and Warren about your negotiations? Or they were not really negotiations, but they were because they became kind of intensely personal it seems, but with Mrs. Marks. How you talked, how you did that, I mean, what did you do and what did she do? Cause it was very unconventional in a way.

GA: Yeah. Mrs. Marks' lawyer was Alan Kay. Alan Kay became a federal judge later on. But Alan, I liked Alan. Nice, decent person. So I talked to Alan about the Waiāhole property. I wanted to meet Mrs. [Elizabeth] Marks and he arranged for that meeting. We were able to work that meeting out and she came to Washington Place and we talked. I talked to her about how important that Marks name was in terms of all the development of the windward side. How people ought to remember the contribution she made, both as a landowner and as a land commissioner. At one time Lester Marks was land commissioner. I told her that I think it would be very shameful that if his legacy was lost. I told her, "One of the ways to do that, don't let Joe Pao develop that property. You have an agreement with them, pending agreement with him, but don't let him do that. If you can get that property, and we can remain Marks Estate, Marks property, then we will always talk about Waiāhole, Marks Estate. Then your name and his name could be remembered for something that happened in Hawai'i." She told me at that point she wasn't too sure about it. She told me she wanted to think about it.

"You think about it. I don't want you to rush into it. You think about it."

About two or three weeks later, Alan Kay called me. She said, "Mrs. Marks wanted to come meet again. She wants to talk." So we met again.

This time she told me, "You know, I've been thinking about what you have told me about us selling the property and getting monies, against us keeping that property for the state and having people use it the way it's being used now. And the Marks legacy." And she said, "I'm inclined to agree with you." And maybe that's what they ought to do. She told me, "But how are you going to buy—for how much are you going to buy the property?"

I told her, “Mrs. Marks, I don’t want to go to the legislature. I can do this without going to the legislature and I can only pay you six million dollars.”

TC: We need to change tape.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

TC: At least things don’t just happen. There is not inevitability. It’s not inevitably going to develop. One of the big things I think that was going on at that time was inevitably, the course of development going to jump from the edge of Kāne‘ohe and takeover Kahalu‘u and then it’s going to go Waiāhole-Waikāne. This was a given. This is like a fixed given.

GA: Mm-hmm.

TC: This is the intervention, the conscious, purposeful intervention.

GA: Yeah. That’s where I feel, my personal thoughts of it, in order to do something, you’ve got to talk. In order to get something, you’ve got to ask. You’ve got to talk and you’ve got to ask, very important.

TC: So it’s back to relationship, the story is back to relationship.

GA: Alan called me, told me that Mrs. Marks wanted to talk again. So she came. We talked. She told me she was thinking about a great deal about what I was saying to her. She told me, money against leaving a legacy. Then the question came how much am I going to pay for it. I told her I didn’t want to go to the legislature. I felt that I had the resources to pay for this, six million dollars.

She told me, “Six million dollars! All of that property, I can get far more than that six million dollars.”

I told her, “Yeah Mrs. Marks, that’s true. But you know what? I want to keep the land relatively undeveloped. I want to keep it in agriculture. I want the farmers who are there to be able to use the land in ways they’ve been using it. You are going to endear yourself and the Marks’ name to all the people there for being willing to go along for this amount.” She finally told me—she had to talk to Alan about it again. Alan called to tell me Mrs. Marks accepts. She took six million dollars.

I had to go to a national governors meeting on a Friday. I got to Washington on Saturday. At that time the news broke. I had the legislature going crazy. Joe Pao was going to subdivide the property and I stepped in and saved that property from being subdivided. Now I’ve become involved with this conflict with Joe Pao. They were very, very concerned that the state had gotten involved in that way. Some of them indicated they can’t put up the monies. They’re going to have a hard time approving the monies. So I told my staff, let them know, that I’ll come back on Monday and I’ll talk to them about it, but not to worry. I’m not going to ask them for any kind of work, that we are going to be able to work this thing without going to the legislature. And that’s what I did. When I explained why I did it, all the legislators began to feel, “Eh, maybe that’s the right thing to do to save this property.”

MK: So the payment for the land came from a separate fund?

GA: You know, we have federal monies and we have monies appropriated and authorized. I was able to take some of that, authorized funds, to spend it for this purpose.

MK: So this purchase . . .

GA: It was state monies.

MK: So this purchase of the Marks Estate was the beginning of more purchases by the state on the windward side? And which areas did you successfully purchase as time went on?

GA: Well, it was Marks Estate, He'eia Kea Matson Point, Pounders Bay, Mālaekahana Bay Park. Did I mention the 1,500 acres of . . .

TC: Kaiaka Point, Sacred Falls.

GA: Sacred Falls. Kaiaka Point, the whole point I bought also. I bought some land in Waimanalo.

Now the young who were with me were very concerned about the political side. They told me, "Governor, you buy all this property you don't have money to develop it. Nobody is going to know what you did. Shouldn't we stop buying properties and buy so people can see what you did."

My response to them was, "You want the property, you want the future or you want to look good?" They looked at me and then they understood what I was saying to them. Buy all the property and the future is going to be better. Save some money, not buy everything and then put improvements, spend monies there, and we're going to have less properties that we can buy and the future is going to be impacted. That's why I feel so strongly about land, state lands.

When you talk about Andy Anderson buying three acres of property in Hale'iwa, it was thirteen acres state park but they can only use and develop ten acres, so the three acres they're not using now. They're talking about selling to Andy Anderson. We shouldn't do that. It's state property. Not now maybe, but some point in the future, that property, ten acres is not going to be enough. Got to be very important to get that additional three acres in order to be able to have a good park out there. We should not be selling these properties, especially if they're selling to take care of the current need. The block here, Downtown: Bishop, Beretania, Alakea, and Vineyard. That property was owned by the city. They sold that property for ten million dollars. And the city doesn't have the money anymore. They lost that property. The ten million dollars was used to take care of their operating needs. So it's gone. They took an asset that belonged to the people and they used it for their own need. To me that's so wrong. They were going to do that in Kaka'ako also. The legislature stepped in and they stopped them from doing that. I hope—I think the council is going to stop them from doing it. I hope [it isn't sold,] the land in Hale'iwa.

TC: That was only because of voter uprising. They were going to do it.

GA: Mm-hmm.

TC: You know what the root—this was very, very interesting because a lot of people spoke up. But at the root of that, it was the surfers up there, who took care of those three acres and would have clean-ups. They'd say this is ours, really. They would have clean-up drives in those three acres and say, "We have to keep this nice. We'll make it a park even though the city doesn't recognize it as such." They turned the tide of opinion around because many years they did that. It wasn't just a PR thing at the time it became a controversy in the paper.

WN: Is that the Hale'iwa Beach Hotel?

TC: Yeah, right.

GA: Mm-hmm. Hale'iwa Hotel.

WN: Andy Anderson wanted to buy it to restore the hotel.

GA: That's right. So if you were able to buy that hotel, buy the three acres, and he built the hotel, it's not going to be a hotel with three acres of ground there. It's going to be a hotel and they're going to say, "You know what? We have thirteen acres of park land over there and our hotel is right there." They're going to use the rest of the park acreage as a way to sell the occupancy in the hotel.

TC: Not only that, but that land had been condemned. It was owned by Bishop Estate and it was condemned for something like \$300,000. The city was going to put it on a bid, upset price for \$260,000, fifteen years later. They were going to sell it for less than what they had acquired it by eminent domain. Which is a fantastic—it's a complete abuse of the whole thought of eminent domain.

GA: Maybe if this is a property and the highway cuts through it, and maybe small sliver of property here, like that, you can sell those properties because they're not of any use. But anything that's sizeable that belongs, acquired by the state—not by eminent domain for roadway purposes, but what we own, we shouldn't be selling. Unless you want to sell that to buy something else. Not buy it to pay for operating expenses.

MK: You were saying that you wanted to keep the windward side the way it was for the future, but some people would argue, "Nah, we don't need it to be in agriculture. We don't need it to be green."

GA: Because the more development we have, the more people are going to feel that they should be someplace that is not that developed, a place where they can go. Today, when I go to Turtle Bay, I don't drive that way, I drive around this way. I enjoy driving over there and seeing land not developed yet, people playing in the beaches and the playgrounds out there.

WN: You drive the windward side.

GA: The windward side.

WN: Rather than the leeward side.

GA: Right, right. So in addition to what we did there on the Kahuku side, what we looked at, what we talked to Campbell [Estate] about dedicating lands for agriculture and we created aquaculture farms out there, shrimps. Today, when I go out there, I see shrimps being sold on trucks. That's the shrimp that we started out there, the shrimp farms. Part of it is our desire to see, in addition to agriculture, the kind of aquaculture things. The one that really went by was—I felt very bad, sorry to see it go. . . . what's the senator? Sea Life Park. He started Sea Life Park.

TC: Right, his father was with Pan American.

GA: Pan American, right.

TC: What a character he was.

MK: What's his name?

GA: Maybe it'll come back. When he got appointed as a senator—I think he filled Patsy Mink's seat. There was a lot of pressure on him to run for reelection, the next election. They were telling him that he had an obligation to run now to save that democrat seat. I saw all that pressure. One day I called and I told him, "What's your mission in life?"

He told me, "I'm an ocean person. I want to develop things that I can grow."

I told him, "Why are you even considering running for government? You're concerned about Sea Life Park. You're concerned about some of the ocean activities. That's what you should do."

He looked at me and he stood up and he embraced me and told me, "But nobody told me I can do this. Everybody's telling me I can't do this and I've got to be a politician."

So I told him, "No. Every person has to do what their calling is all about. And your calling is not to be a politician. Your calling is to do this kind of ocean, growing things."

He started a shrimp farm out there. You know why he lost that shrimp farm? I helped him get a six million dollar ag loan. The ag department approved that loan; they guaranteed that loan. So he was now able to go to the private sector and borrow that six million dollars. He got this shrimp farm. He already had the small beginnings of it but he put monies to increase the development. One day when I saw him, I told him, "How's your farm coming along?"

Said, "Oh, the farm is really good." But he needs some money for the operation side. He's getting short on the operation side.

I said, "What? You spent all the six million dollars and you didn't keep any operating funds?"

He told me, “No, but I’m not worried because I have a rich Indonesian friend who has promised he’s going to give me monies to operate, for the operation. He gave me some monies already.”

I told him, “But how long is it going to continue? You need to that until you get your farm established until you get income coming in.” So I told him I wanted to come out to see him one day. And I went out to see him one weekend. He was telling me that the money that the Indonesian promised him is not coming through. He’s having difficulty. But there’s somebody else who has promised to provide monies for him. He’s a guy who was a crook. He raised monies from one group and raised some more monies to pay off this other group and raised some more monies to pay off this group, so he kept on going.

TC: This is a trust company. Bishop Trust Company was his front thing. He called it Bishop Trust.

GA: Something like that.

TC: What was his name? He ended up in prison.

GA: See, when I went out to the farm at Kahuku, I saw the guy. I didn’t say anything and he’s looking around. He told me, “That’s the fellow who’s talking about getting me some monies.”

I had run an investigation on him. He was talking about he used to be a Stanford football player. He used to raise all kinds of monies, investment in business. From Minnesota or someplace, I had people check him out. And he told me, “They can’t find him. There’s no person like him doing what he said he was doing.” The conclusion was that he’s a big fraud. I knew that but I could not tell him because the investigation was very private. I couldn’t tell him.

The only thing I could tell him was, “Be very careful because people who promise you money does not mean—unless you see the monies—does not mean it’s going to come through.”

TC: You were governor at this time?

GA: I was governor at that time.

MK: The person who had Sea Life Park, and the aquaculture was Tap Pryor.

GA: Tap Pryor! That shrimp farm was doing so well. If he had saved some monies to keep the operation going, he would have had a very nice operation. He lost that. Then he told me he was going to the Big Island. He was going to find an operation on the Big Island where he was going to grow some turtle. The turtle effluent, they’re going to have a flow water going to become food for some shrimp that he was going to get started out there. But that never came about. I told Tap, I told him, very carefully, “Tap, Sea Life Park, you started it and you don’t have it. You started a shrimp farm, you don’t have it. You wanted a wind farm out there, you don’t have it. You got to make something succeed and you’ve got to stick it out. You got to wait until it’s finished. If you start this thing, be sure start

from start. But finish it, you're good till the very end and finish it so that you owe it to yourself to be successful so you can get some income out of it." I was really sorry to see Tap to go the way he did.

TC: You had your finger on his pattern. He . . .

GA: He was very sore, you know. He was very sore with his father because his father, he told me, because Tap Pryor's father is very wealthy, had all kind of connections. When he wanted to start this Sea Life Park, the father could have picked up the telephone and made a few calls and got the monies to help him. The father did not do that. Tap had to go out walking, and he had to find all the resources, put all the monies together to get Sea Life Park together. When Tap told me the story, I told Tap, I said, "Tap, I'm a father too. So, I'm going to talk from a father's point of view. I'm going to tell you that I admire your father."

He looked at me and he said, "I had a hard time."

I said, "That's right. You had a hard time and you succeeded and that's what your father wanted to do. He could pick up the telephone and make it happen for you, but what's going to happen after that? You don't have any strength. This way, your father forced you to go out, walk the street to find that money and now look at what you have. Sea Life Park. It's because your father was willing to go through difficult to see you suffer so much and yet knowing that you were going to succeed." I told him, "I really admire your father for what he did for you."

TC: How did he take that?

GA: He took it very—he told me, "Governor, I never thought of it that way." He never saw that this was his father, love for him, wanted to help him, wanted him to get his own strength to do it himself.

TC: You know, when you had that conversation with him about "don't run for re-election, just follow your real passion," were you governor at that point?

GA: No. He and I were senators.

TC: You were both senators. I remember that was a big deal that he didn't run again.

GA: Yeah. Oh, they were very critical. And I took some of that rap. I told them, "I think he made the right decision. This is where he belongs. If he can really make a mark, it would be good for Hawai'i." Who else can do the kind of work that he had the promise to do at that time?

TC: He was one of the really interesting people of the time. I think the money man who ended up in jail, was his name Resnick? Was his name Resnick? That wasn't quite it either.

GA: You know, what that guy did, one day I was on the Big Island, and they had a polo match out here. The head of Pacific Island—oh, shucks . . . Not Indonesia, not Malaysia, another smaller island, very wealthy island. He was attending a . . .

MK: Polo match.

GA: Polo player. He came and they played polo at that Dillingham Field out there. This guy, who's a crook, was there also. Jeanie was invited to go there. She went ahead of me and she was there. She sat at a bar having something to eat. This fellow, Jeanie, and this other crook, and they had a picture taken. And when he went in trouble, he indicated he had many kind of friends in important places too. He took this picture, he cut off this guy and it came out in Time magazine.

MK: Oh, no.

TC: It was [Ron Rewald]. And he was a phenomenal—he was a Ponzi scheme person essentially.

GA: Yeah.

TC: Ponzi in the sense that he would promise these huge returns.

GA: Yeah.

TC: And he kept the money flowing in.

GA: And a big house, big car, out in Portlock side.

TC: Was this person who was there the Sultan of Brunei?

GA: Sultan of Brunei.

TC: Oh, my God.

GA: Yup, Sultan of Brunei.

TC: He was one of the richest people in the world.

GA: That's right. (Chuckles) The worst part of it is, for that picture to come out, he cut it off and only he and Jeanie were in that picture. It came out in Time magazine. He had friends in important places.

TC: (Laughs) Also you thought Jeanie Ariyoshi was better public relations than . . .

MK: The Sultan. (Laughs)

GA: The Sultan of Brunei was a really nice person too.

TC: He was your friend.

GA: He had invited Jeanie and us to come and visit with him too. We never took him up.

TC: Shall we go on a little while?

GA: Okay.

TC: Is that okay? There was this very interesting relationship to Governor Burns I think at this point. Or as you're thinking about managed growth, slowing down growth, et cetera, because Governor Burns was very identified with stimulating development, rapid growth, and was severely criticized as this process went on.

GA: Mm-hmm.

TC: In your evolution of your putting these ideas together, did he ever try to slow you down or divert you from this thinking?

GA: No. Governor Burns and Tom Gill were on opposite ends. Tom was really anti-growth. He didn't want to see any growth. Governor Burns felt that you needed some growth in order to succeed, make things happen. In a sense, I agreed with Governor Burns because you needed some growth. You cannot stand still and say no growth takes place. Those words, carrying capacity and appropriate growth, were words that I used very much.

Governor Burns also told me when we were talking, from the very beginning he told me, "You and I are two different individuals. You were born here; I wasn't. You're Oriental; I'm Caucasian. I didn't go to school here; you went to school here. So we are naturally going to have differences of feelings and opinions." He said, "I want you to understand that I approve of that. I understand that. I don't want you to become a spitting image of me. I want you to feel free to develop your own thinking. And if it's not the same as mine that's okay too. You can disagree with me and I can disagree with you, and that's okay too." So I really appreciated that conversation that we had when he told me, "Don't feel you're obligated to come along and do everything my way. You are different from me. I expect you to be different." That's the conversation that we had.

So I felt really free to go on talking about concerns about the growth that was taking place, concerns about how we accommodate the growth that was going to take place. And can we accommodate something less than what we needed. What's appropriate kind of growth that we need to take care of us? You cannot eliminate the population, once there—we're going to go back and say we're not going to take care of them? They're part of our community.

That's the other part that I felt was very important. We talk about the growth that takes place. We talk about newcomers coming. But I never wanted to separate the *kama'āinas* from the *malihinis*. They're a part of Hawai'i and that's how they feel, then they're part of us and we got to accommodate, everything, all of us. I don't want to separate in that fashion. So I wanted the people who came and were here to feel very comfortable, that they're not alienated, trying to get them away from our state for some reason. But I felt also that we had to deal with the growth problem. In fact some of them who came were even more extreme than me. We used to talk about them as they don't want anyone else to come in now.

TC: Raise the draw bridge.

GA: Yeah. Extreme, some of those newcomers were.

TC: Do you think that Governor Burns's thinking was shifting or like his drive for development in early statehood was kind of a compensation to develop infrastructure, develop the economy? By that time he'd been governor. That was his third term. Was he shifting or was he just kind of pulling back?

GA: I believe he was shifting. I'll tell you why also. When the Maryland bill failed, during a later session we were able to work up a compromise. And that compromise was condemnation based upon the request for condemnation property. We condemned everybody's property, not just current, future landowners. Everybody's property. We got the thing passed. Governor Burns when the Maryland bill failed, he thanked me. He agreed with me that I did the right thing. When this other bill came up, and we worked the thing out, it became law, but Governor Burns never implemented. That was around 1964-'65.

TC: [Nineteen] sixty-seven. Leasehold conversion.

GA: Yeah. That's when three years had gone by during his administration. When I became lieutenant governor when I talked to him about it, I mentioned—and he had indicated that he was kind of lukewarm. I felt that maybe we should begin the process. So he told me, "Be my guest."

I looked at the Mānoa property. We talked about wanting to maybe take a look at that. But before I could get too far on that, the election came about. I was very fortunate in getting Dave Slipher who understood the leasehold development process and property more than anybody else did because he was the person who handled all of Kaiser Estate. He was the one who developed that. When I'd ask him if he would come to me, when he told me he'd be willing to, I told him, "Dave, you remember you were for pushing for development. Now, we're taking the land that you pushed for development and we're talking about condemning that, becoming owned by people who bought the property."

He told me, "I understand that." He believed it's the right thing to do and it's the right process for the people who bought the property. They sold 'em at the leasehold but now that they bought the property, they should have the right to be able to buy. So he was the one who really made my condemnation process that all worked very nicely.

TC: It's important in this narrative you see Governor Ariyoshi develop the conceptual base for this with Senator [John] Lanham. It's sort of your baby in a way.

GA: Yeah. Because Senator Lanham came to me the following year and he asked me, "Eh, what do you think? How can we do this thing? Don't you want anybody to buy a home?"

I said, "No, that's not it. I want to help but it's got to be fair to everybody and it's very unfair to the people who already have leases, because going to have two classes of people."

And he told, "Let me think about that." He came back to me later on and we talked about condemnation. I think we were lucky that John Lanham was there at that time. He was open. He was willing. He was ready to accept the fact that I did this because I felt very strongly about the impact on people who had leases already. And Lanham was ready to

open his mind and look at it and see what could be done so that—that's what I told people! Show me a way that we can do this without hurting existing leaseholders and I'm prepared to move.

TC: I think he was very good at working with a broad range of people, John Lanham was.

MK: Shall we end here? Twelve-thirty.

TC: We've really covered a lot of ground.

MK: Yeah. We did a lot today. Okay. Governor, thank you.

GA: That's why I feel very strongly about in Hawai'i, you know we can talk and we're not—if you think, we're not afraid to ask. You'd be surprised how many people would be willing to help.

MK: Sometimes it's common sense that complicates things.

GA: Earlier about maybe three or four years ago, I had a visit from a couple, Oriental couple. They brought their package of beautiful avocado. When I saw that they brought avocado, "Oh, thank you. I love avocado."

"Yeah, we know that. We want you to know that we have started a new farm. This is our farm product now, avocado." At that time, he said he was an avocado grower. He said, "Anytime you need avocado, please call me." (MK chuckles.) Beautiful avocado he was growing. He told me, "I was one of those who left farming at the time you made a decision to buy the Marks property." After that property, after they did that—"After you left we had hard time working up a deal with the state, ag department, land department."

I don't know what the problem was but for a long time they couldn't get leaseholders. I never could understand why they couldn't work out because if I were there, once we bought the property, I would have told the attorneys, "Eh, go prepare leases so they can sign." For leases are very important because I want the leases to be on terms where if they wanted to stop, and their heirs, sons or somebody, family, wanted to take over, then they should have the right to take over and have that lease assigned to them. The assignment to that lease was, to me, a very important part. Otherwise, they're going to stop at one point. You want to have that thing continue in that same fashion.

I remember the ag lease that I gave to create an ag park on every island. The ag park, I was amazed at how many people wanted to lease those properties. We didn't put them out to bid for the highest bidder. It was by drawing. We decided what they could pay and what they ought to pay. Reasonable enough so that they could farm the property. Then we let them draw lots for the property. So it was by drawing instead of by bidding that these people got the property.

I told them to come to me. Later on telling me they want, "Can you get some more?" Big Island we had ten-acre lots. Lot of the Anthuriums that are out in the market today, doing very well, are on state land, that ag park.

TC: We can stop here.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-23-14-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

October 24, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

MK: We'll go from current affairs to past affairs. This is session number fourteen with the governor. (GA chuckles.). It's good.

GA: You folks are going to get tired of seeing me.

(Laughter)

MK: This is session number fourteen. It's October 24. We're in Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i. Warren Nishimoto, Tom Coffman, and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto are the question givers.

About two weeks ago, when we had our last interview session, we spent a lot time talking about you and the international arena, what you had been doing with Japan, a little bit with China, but there's one area that we didn't touch on. When it comes to Hawai'i and the Philippines, that's something that's important for the state. We have a large Filipino population. If you can talk a bit about what you saw as your role as governor, when it came to relations with the Philippines.

GA: Relations with the Philippines is important for several reasons. Number one, Philippines is a country that can be very important, very strong on its own. They have had their own struggles. I think that our role is to try to support that effort. We entered a state agreement with the Philippine Ilocos Sur because that's one way we thought maybe we could help establish some economic ties. There already was economic ties there because we have a lot of Filipinos who have worked in our plantations and who have established themselves in Hawai'i.

The new arrivals from the Philippines have not just been laborers, but there have been professional people, doctors and lawyers. They have become a very important part of the community. Our effort therefore, is not just on making that Philippine government tie important but making that so that the people in Hawai'i can feel, the Filipinos in Hawai'i can feel, that their background is being acknowledged and recognized for being important. So we can tell the Filipinos here in Hawai'i, that they count very much and what they do is important, and that they don't have to become like anybody else. They can remain Filipinos and be a very important part of our community. To me that part is

very important. The tie to the Philippine government and the friendship that we exhibited with the Filipino people and the leadership, translates to Hawai'i and the Filipinos here and how we look at them and encourage them to participate in many, many ways. I have felt very strongly about the ties with the Philippines and the need for us to establish a relationship.

I have been criticized. Some people saying, why should I be so pro-Marcos? I'm pro-Marcos because [Ferdinand] Marcos was the head of the Philippines. We acknowledge whoever the person is as the head of the government there. To have the ties with a country means you're going to have good relations with people. For me it was easy because I don't judge a person by what that person does in a country. It's not up to me. It's for the people there to make the decision, whether it's there, China, or some other places in Asia. My feeling is that Hawai'i cannot choose like that. Hawai'i must be open and friendly to all the people who are titular heads of the countries.

MK: When it came to President Marcos and his wife [Imelda Marcos], what was the relationship between yourself and Mrs. Ariyoshi and the president and Mrs. Marcos?

GA: The relationship was very close because we treated them with dignity, just like we treated every other person who comes to Hawai'i. That resulted in the—from the Marcos side, feeling they're very grateful that we treated them with respect in that kind of way. So there was a friendship established between the Marcos's and us. On top of that we had many opportunities to talk about the relationship. I think I talked a great deal about the Philippines-Hawai'i friendship, about Filipinos residing here. That kind of discussion, many of them took place between us and the Marcos's.

We had an opportunity to talk about—even suggesting some things that maybe the Philippines could do that might be very good. One thing, for example, I felt very strongly that the Philippines under Marcos had talked about wanting to become an industrial power, becoming more—in addition to just agriculture, doing things more productively, more manufacturing, more things in their country.

One day I had a chance to talk to the president. I told him, "You know in Hawai'i, our agriculture, a great deal of support comes from Filipinos who have come to Hawai'i. They're very talented with their hands. They can grow things, green thumbs. We have taken advantage of that and our agriculture industry had been greatly helped by them. That's the same people you have in the Philippines." I told him, "Why should people go hungry in the Philippines?" All the people should be growing things so that everybody in the Philippines don't have to worry about where their next meal is coming from. That's going to be a great advantage that you have when it comes to the country areas, when the Communist groups start coming in because many people are suffering. They're hungry. I had that kind of conversation with the Marcos's.

That friendship made it possible for us to be very candid and talk about the things that maybe they needed. At the same time, Mrs. Marcos told me, "Governor, I hope that you folks will do everything you can to support the Filipino people." She told me, "You have new groups of Filipinos coming in, professional people. We hope that Hawai'i will accommodate and accept them also as part of the Filipino group."

My response was, "Of course we would." Because that's the kind of thing, to make it possible, for the Filipinos themselves to be able to say, "We're not just laborers. We have our people involved in all different levels of activities at different wage-earning levels also."

MK: Because you had this close relationship with the president and with Mrs. Marcos, at any time had you ever discussed—I guess what other people would call—his dictatorial manner, the abuses of power maybe that he had practiced as president? Were there ever any discussions of that sort?

GA: No. I never talked about that because if I did, I would be saying to him that I have confirmed and I know all these things to be true. I couldn't say that. I know that there were instances where people—there were abuses and things, people very strongly talking about them. But at the same time, I knew that she [Imelda Marcos] was getting private monies and getting private support to build hospitals, auditoriums, music centers that she thought would be very beneficial to people. So while there were abuses, at the same time I knew that she was taking positive steps to build trade centers and hospitals and music centers because she felt that that kind of thing is very important to her people, for her people to come whole.

MK: When you would hear on the news about the public protests and the ousting of the Marcos's, what were your thoughts then?

GA: I happened to be in the Philippines, I think in December, before the ouster took place, and before the election took place also. At that time, I had some conversations with Mrs. Marcos. She was telling me, "Maybe what we must do is, we've got to strengthen our agriculture, and do a lot, concentrate a great deal on strengthening agriculture." So I remember having some of that kind of conversation with them.

But when they were coming out of the Philippines, I happened to be in Washington at the national governors' meeting. I got contacted by the State Department that the Marcos's were coming in to Hawai'i. They didn't tell me, but suggested to me, that it might be very nice and appropriate if I were there to greet them when they arrived in Hawai'i, that I could make the ensuing years very easy for them. So I did. That's why I came back. I greeted them at the airport, Jean and I both did. We were criticized by many people for doing that. I never said that the State Department suggested that we do this, but at the same time, I had Asian leaders who were saying to people they knew in Asia, "After all, Governor, he has an Asian background. He understands the need to be courteous when things are very difficult for a person." So the feelings that were shown, were displayed to me by both sides.

After they came here, I had the State [Department] almost using me, asking me to go and talk to Marcos, asking me to stop a press conference that he had called. There were many ways in which the State Department felt that my relationship with Marcos was important. I ended up at one point, writing a letter to—oh, what's the name of the secretary of state that time? George Shultz. Telling him a background for things that had taken place and that I had done a lot of things. I was called at the golf course when I was playing golf and asked whether or not I would immediately talk to Marcos because he was having a press conference. And I did. I tried to get that stopped but he felt that he had already gone too

far. All the announcements had been made and it was difficult for him to go back. So my advice to him was, "You go ahead with your conference but as soon as it's finished, walk away and get off that stage. Don't take any questions because the questions that come to you are going to be very hard for you to handle." He did that.

That was a benefit to the State Department also because they would have inquired a lot. What really happened? The State Department would have been pulled in to ask about their role in the Marcos support, people power, or Marcos leaving, or their coming to Hawai'i. So I wrote that letter to Shultz and explained all these things and I told him, "It's time maybe they listen to some of us in Hawai'i. I said, "The Filipinos in Hawai'i, some are pro-Marcos and some are anti-Marcos and they're being torn apart. As governor, I don't want to see this happening. I think it's important that we try to bring the Filipinos together. The way we can do this if you would permit the Marcos's to travel." They want to travel. Every time they want to travel, they are being stopped. So I told him, "You know, they should be permitted to go back to the Philippines or to travel elsewhere." I got no response from them.

I know that there was one day when they were scheduled to go to Panama, all ready to go. At five o'clock they were going to leave. At twelve o'clock, we knew that was still on because Jeanie went to see them off and told them bye-bye. She came back. Five o'clock they never left, because between that time, they were stopped. I was told that it was the Philippine president who did not want to see Marcos either come back to the Philippines or travel anywhere. And they wanted them to remain here. But I told George Shultz when I saw him, I said, "Gee, you know what, who controls what happens here? Don't I have some control, say, about what might be important and necessary here in Hawai'i?" And for somebody outside of the state to tell us that person has to remain here in Hawai'i when it's having such a terrible impact on the Filipinos. I don't want to see the Filipinos torn apart like this.

MK: So you kind of wanted the Marcos's to spend their exile elsewhere so that you wouldn't have this dissention and division within the local Filipino community.

GA: Yeah. Not for them to go out permanently, but to be able to travel and come back. So they would not remain here all the time. Because permitting them to travel also meant that the people who are pro-Marcos would feel good: My president, it's not like they're being kept almost captive here in Hawai'i.

MK: When you said that they were planning to go to Panama, that was a trip or change of place?

GA: I don't think it would have been a change. It was more—I don't know that. But I think that they would have gone and maybe travelled some other places also and maybe come back to Hawai'i.

MK: As you said, there was a lot of criticism of you for going to meet the Marcos's and allowing the Marcos's to be here. How did you feel about that criticism? Because you didn't come out and say the State Department said it would be good to do this.

- GA: I think that part of my responsibility is to do whatever has to be done at that time and not have to give reasons for my doing it. I didn't think it would have been good for me to come out at that time and say, "Oh, our country had indicated, the Secretary of the State Department wanted me to come back here and greet." I didn't feel that I should put the State Department in that kind of situation. I felt better take criticism; I'll take it and let it come to rest there.
- MK: How did all this affect your relationship with the local Filipino population?
- GA: There were people who were pro-Marcos. I had received many many words of thanks from people telling me, "My president, thank you for treating him with honor and dignity."
- MK: How about from those who were not pro-Marcos?
- GA: I didn't hear directly from them but I could hear, I could understand, that out there there was a lot of criticism about my greeting. I think a lot of it came from the Filipinos who were anti-Marcos here.
- MK: You were mentioning that Asian leaders felt that you had an understanding of Asian culture and could see why you did what you did. Did you think it came from your Asian upbringing too?
- GA: Yeah. I think almost everything I did; my feelings were affected by my own culture of tolerance, of understanding, of respect for people. I don't think that I ever felt (anything) against a leader because of my own judgment. My feeling always has been every country—here in Hawai'i we have a right to make our own determination, in America we have a right to make our own determination. Why shouldn't (everyone else in every country) have that kind of right also? Every country should have the right to make their own decisions what they wanted of their leaders. I didn't feel it was right for me to make decisions about (leadership in another country). It's up to them. That's what was acknowledged.
- MK: During their period of exile—it was a few years that they were here. What was your relationship during that time?
- GA: We saw them from time to time. I felt that they should be made welcome by the state here. Jean and I got to see them not on a regular basis but from time to time we did. When something came up, we got together with them.
- TC: Did you see Marcos in the period when his health was in very steep decline and he was basically dying?
- GA: I saw him once.
- TC: What kind of shape was he in at that time? Was his mind clear? Was he just this body giving way?

GA: He was very lucid. We were able to talk. I never felt, when I think about it now, I don't recall their feeling against the government, against the United States. I never felt that situation.

MK: Did they, at any time, ask you to advocate on their behalf?

GA: No. They never did that. I did say, when they first came in, I talked to them about how they left the Philippines. They told me that they were taken out of the Philippines; they were not told where they were going to be brought to. I think the name of the general who came with them, was General Bell. I did have a conversation with him. I wanted to know whether or not they wanted to come out or whether the country, the military, wanted to take him out of the Philippines. He confirmed to me that they were the ones who decided that Marcos should leave. They were going to take him to Guam, initially. But they brought them to Hawai'i.

MK: When you mentioned this general—this general was an American general?

GA: American general, who was in charge of the operation to bring Marcos out. I told the Marcoses at that time, it's important, I think, that you get some documentation about what happened and what made you come out, how you came out, who made you come out, who arranged all of this, because I told him, "History will forget this. History will show that, it will come out and say, you fled the Philippines."

He said, "I never wanted to flee the Philippines. I wanted to go up Ilocos Norte."

So I told him, "You should now get some things documented so it's very clear." But I'm not sure he ever did that.

MK: When he passed away and the family left the islands, was anything left in terms of documents or records or letters?

GA: I don't know.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: You mentioned when all this was going on, you spoke with an American general. In those days, as governor, what was your view of the military presence here?

TC: Could I back up to some very general questions because your comments focus on the broad migration of the people of the Philippines to Hawai'i and the successive waves. We talked a lot in these interviews about your growing up. Do you have any recollection of how you think Filipinos were perceived during the period when you were growing up? Because I think there's a historic evolution inside these comments.

GA: Yeah. I think the Filipinos were perceived as laborers. That's all they could do. Nobody really tried to rise above that. The first person, and the one person I know, was Alfred Laureta. But most of the other Filipinos were very content in being the son of plantation immigrants and never tried. . . I think, but I'm not sure, the college graduates compared to other ethnic groups, the ratio was very low.

TC: Very low.

GA: Very low. That's the other thing that I felt very strongly about, that we have to do everything possible to raise the level so that they could become better. I remember a meeting at Maui Community College, where I spoke about opportunities and I wanted every person in the community to be treated fair and equally and rise on the basis of their abilities. I had two young Filipino girls at the end come up to me and talk to me. They told me that they were touched by what I had said. They felt that they didn't know whether or not it was possible for them as Filipinos.

They looked at me and they told me, "I think sometimes I'm ashamed to say I'm Filipino."

I told them, "That's the point I'm trying to make to you. (When you say) you're keeping yourselves down. You're saying you're not as good as anybody else because you're ashamed of yourselves and you can never reach the level of everybody else. You forget that! As far as I'm concerned you're as good as anybody else. You can reach out. What you have to do is to be sure you train yourself in a way that makes it possible for you to reach out and become like everybody else. Education is very important. I'm glad that you are here at Maui Community College now. Don't stop. Keep on going. Go for higher, some more education. Reach out because you, as far as I'm concerned, you are just as good as anybody else. Don't be ashamed of who you are."

I had that kind of feeling, the importance of us acknowledging the equality in our community, saying that we need this diversity. Every person, don't forget who they are. Don't forget the culture. Practice it. But don't let that be something that keeps you down. Say, because I am all these things I have the opportunity to get up and become whatever I want to become. For me, everything I did—my relationship to Marcos, the Philippines—was my desire to acknowledge that this group of Filipino people in Hawai'i need not be ashamed of what was happening elsewhere.

TC: As a footnote for the record, one of these girls read Governor Ariyoshi's book. She eventually got a master's degree in public health.

GA: Oh really? Oh my.

TC: And she was very moved by that.

GA: Oh, I'm happy to hear that. I didn't know that. I didn't know what happened to those two girls after that.

TC: I just read—I stumbled across. It was one of those serendipitous conversations.

GA: That makes me feel good about it.

MK: You should get her together with the governor one day (laughs). Wow.

TC: I wanted to—please go on.

- MK: That was very important to document it. Anyways, since you had mentioned that conversation with the American general, I was wondering, as governor, what were your thoughts about the military presence in Hawai'i? Their role.
- GA: Military? I supported their presence here. I think it was important in the overall scheme of things. I'm not a military strategist and I don't know all the important military moves that he had made, even the important military moves in terms of, not only national defense, but in terms of international relationships. I know, and I knew then, that the military people had very close contact—not just military—but very close contact with the civilian authorities, leaders, and in Japan and elsewhere. So I felt that that role, military presence here in Hawai'i, was important and I'm very supportive of them.
- MK: What was your view about the military population? You've got the servicemen, you've got their families. They're all residing in this community of Hawai'i. How did you view that presence and how they fit into Hawai'i?
- GA: I wanted to be sure, number one, that the military, the federal government, provided the housing so that housing for them would not become a problem. They would not be coming out and trying to get housing that belonged to the civilian population. So the housing part, I think the military met their obligations, the U.S. government obligations, fairly well. I think also, in terms of support for the military as far as—I think there's two parts to the military. One is the military personnel and what they do in terms of their official duties. The other is their dependents and their children and the wives. I felt that part they have to become like every other person and treated like every other person in Hawai'i so that they're not [treated differently when the husbands are] deployed. They remain here, they have their children. Why should that separation and the children be treated any differently in Hawai'i? I felt that they're something that shouldn't be set aside and dealt differently.

President Reagan got elected in 1980. In 1982, during the first legislative session, he was talking and his budget director—I think was Stockman.

- TC: David Stockman [Director of the Office of Management and Budget].
- GA: Yeah. He was talking about wanting to balance the budget by passing on more of the activities to the state without providing the funding to go with that. They were talking about cutting back on a lot of support for state activity. One of the big activities was impact aid to education. That aid was to provide for the state educating the military families and the federal worker families. In 1982, that was the start of the second year of Reagan's term. They came out and they said that they were going to look at impact aid to education as a way to cut back the federal spending. The legislature passed a measure. I thought they were kidding but somebody mentioned to me—I thought they were kidding—but that measure provided that if the federal government cut off that impact aid to education, that in order for those youngsters to go to school, they had to pay tuition. I thought it was a gesture on their part to try to tell the federal government they were very concerned, but it passed. It passed so fast and they came up to me. As soon as they came up to me, I indicated I was going to veto the measure. I won't tell you who the person is but he came to me to talk to me. Came to me and told me, "You can't veto this bill. You've got to sign it."

I told him, “How can you folks talk equality in the classroom? How can you tell the kids, students in Hawai‘i, that they have to be good and treat them fairly and no bullying, don’t beat up any”—because there was lots of talk at that time about beating up some of these youngsters. “How can you preach that? And at the same time come to me now and tell me that you folks want us to discriminate between the local residents and the federal families.”

They told me, “But we’re not trying to do that.”

I told them, “That’s what it says. If it becomes law, if I sign it, it becomes law. And that’s what it’s going to say.” They don’t think the president will stop [impact aid]. “That’s not the point.” I told them. It’s what impression you make and what you say to the people: that you’re going to make the distinction between our children and the federally connected children. I told them, “You know those children, they didn’t ask to come to Hawai‘i. They weren’t asked to be born to a federal family. But they’re here because of the job that they have and the job has been paid by the federal government. So it’s not their fault.”

They told me, “Well.” They felt very strongly.

I told them, “In all fairness, fairness is sometimes I think very difficult. You got to stand up for the things that are difficult. It may not be what you want, but that’s what being fair is all about.” I told them I was going to veto it. And I vetoed it immediately.

MK: Gee. That was pretty extreme, yeah? (Chuckles) Every time there’s an election, there’s always talk about the need to keep up military spending for the benefit of employment in Hawai‘i or the economics of Hawai‘i. During your time, how important was military spending here?

GA: It was very important. Federal spending was very important in Hawai‘i. But I don’t like to make a distinction between—say that they should be in Hawai‘i because of spending. I feel they have been in Hawai‘i because strategically this is the best for our military effort and our relation to [Asia]. It’s not only military, it’s not only active fighting, it’s military presence here and contact with—CINCPAC for example. No not CINCPAC anymore, yeah? CINCPAC were the commanders in chief of the Pacific fleet. They go out to all the countries in Asia and meet only with the military people. They meet the leaders and talk about American hopes and aspirations, talk about how we acknowledge that their hopes and aspirations are part of it also. That’s where we got to work together, not only military but to come together on the things that are above, beyond the military. That’s what I think that the military here in Hawai‘i does. So maybe different from any other military bastion. The civil government functions are mixed very much closely with the military presence here in Hawai‘i.

MK: Today we’ve talked about the Philippines and I forgot to ask you about Hawai‘i and it’s role with Pacific Islands. I guess in those days, it would be the Trust Territory. . .

TC: Can I interject another. . .

MK: Sure.

TC: I forgot this completely but during your governorship, if I remember right, the Hawaiian protests against the use of Kaho‘olawe by the navy for bombing practice began. It created a crunch on practice and relationships et cetera. What was your feeling about it when it began and then as it played out? It played out over a long period.

GA: For me, the question was: Was it necessary for the military to do what they were doing? If it’s not necessary, why are they creating all these concerns to the native Hawaiians? Maybe something should be done about it. So my first inquiry was, is this necessary? Do you have to? They said, “Well, it’s necessary to a point but.”

I said, “When I say ‘necessary,’ do you have to have this in general to maintain your military presence?” And their response to me was no. So my response, “Why then, are you continuing to do what has to be done?” Then it came up to, “Because the islands are very dangerous now.” The past bombing that took place, that island was used for bombing practice. The situation was that may be very dangerous. That has to be cleaned up. There was some reluctance to spend the time to clean this up. So they thought don’t do anything about it so that they don’t have to go and clean it up also. But the people, Hawaiians who were feeling very strongly about this, thought that the islands should be—not only stop the bombing, but it should be cleaned up, and whoever has to do it, has to clean it up.

So that became—Senator [Daniel K.] Inouye stepped in. Senator Inouye was the one who, from the Washington side, provided the opportunity, and the decision was made to stop the bombing and to also clean up Kaho‘olawe. So I am very grateful to Senator Inouye for what he did because we were only talking to them, the military, about doing this. We didn’t have the power to stop them. Inouye had the power to do that.

MK: That was a key change to stop the bombing, clean it up, and then now there’s access.

GA: The native groups told me that they would be willing to do some of the planting because you can’t take an island and clean it up. It’s going to remain devastated unless you have green being planted. That’s what that Kaho‘olawe group began to do.

MK: When that first started, did you take the group seriously? You know, their protesting and their general view?

GA: When I became governor, that’s what started. Everybody learned how to protest. So we had lots of things, people protesting against war. We had that kind of protest. The Kaho‘olawe.

MK: You had Waiāhole and Waikāne.

GA: Yes.

MK: All that. Maybe we can return to the question that I had about Hawai‘i, the role of Hawai‘i and you as governor as it related to the Pacific islands, especially since Hawai‘i is made up of islands.

GA: I have felt very strongly that the Pacific island nations are very important to us for two reasons. One, in terms of our territorial control. They have the 200 miles beyond their land. They have control over the vast Pacific Ocean. I felt it was important because they had that control for them to be friendly to us. But beyond that, as a people, I feel that our people were more like—at one time—more like the people out there who became like we are today, and that we had a role to play in helping in their development. So we said to them things like, “We understand you want to urbanize and we want to help you do that, but please understand also that maybe you don’t want every place to get urbanized. You don’t want to change so much that your people become lost in your own country. You got to be very careful about how you do that.”

We played a very important role with the Interior Department. We started off first with the American territories because the American territories, they didn’t have a vote in Congress. They had delegates. But we felt that it was important for them to be acknowledged, because how we dealt with them, and what they say, was going to have great impact on how we dealt with the rest of the non-territorial countries. So I put together a Pacific basin development group. I chaired that for two years. After that I wanted them to take it over. That was an opportunity for us to take the American territories [in the Pacific Ocean], three American governors—territorial governors—and the state governor, coming together and talking about the U.S. relationship with them and what needed to be done to improve.

When this first happened, I heard the territorial governors give a speech to all the Pacific about how terrible the American government is, about how terrible the Interior Department is, the things that they are doing to them and they’re not being able to get the proper response from them. I wanted to stop that because I felt if American territorial governors were going to talk like that, all the other nations were going to listen. They’re going to think, “Gee, that’s how terrible the U.S. government is. We don’t want to become part of it. We don’t want to get too close to them either.” So I wanted to stop that first.

One time when they were very critical, we had a breakfast meeting. My first meeting with them was a breakfast meeting. My meeting at that time was, “Tell me what your complaints are about the Interior Department. Let’s go see if we can take care of them instead of you only grumbling about them.” So we got that breakfast meeting. We used it as a way of identifying what the issues were that were important to them. Then I went to the Interior Department and used our senators and representatives to go to them also and to talk to them about what was happening. Many times, it was silly what they were trying to do. Some, doggone bureaucrat, not understanding, not caring and doing things that affect the territory, all the people out there. It was very easy to change that. Almost overnight we changed that and the territorial governors stopped talking bad about the federal government and about that relationship. So that became very, very important.

I also felt it was Kiribati—the president of Kiribati one day came to me. They had formed an alliance with Russia. CINCPAC military was getting very, very concerned about the presence of Russian ships and. . .

TC: Fishing rights treaty.

GA: That's right. The Kiribati president came to me when they formed that. He told me, "Governor this had nothing to do with friendship. It's only economic for us. They're going to pay us for these fishing rights. That's what it is."

It was Bob Long—CINCPAC at that time. He came to me and talked to me about, "Eh, you're in contact with these people." He was very concerned about the arrangement with the Soviets. I told him, "The president came to me and told me it's nothing to do with friendship. It's about economics." I told him, "You know what?" We have to maintain, be very friendly, have this friendship out there, but I told him, "You know, to have a friend you have to be a friend. We want them to be our friend. What are we doing to be their friend?" I wanted to provide this opportunity for the territory to become better, be able to handle things better. I proposed that we have this PICHTR [Pacific International Center for High Technology Research], and that PICHTR help them in technology needs, I had a hard time with the Pacific Island leaders. They felt that I was invading their territory; I was trying to take over what they were supposed to be doing—dictating to them how to do their job. I sent [Fujio] "Fudge" Matsuda [president of the University of Hawai'i]. Doris Ching [of the College of Education, University of Hawai'i]. They went into the Pacific for me and talked about what I was planning to do, nothing to do with control over them. Who was the Fiji leader? Fiji president.

TC: Sir . . .

GA: Ratu Mara.

MK: Ratu Mara.

GA: Yeah, Ratu Mara. Ratu Mara was a leader of that group. He was really a great leader but even he was very concerned about what I was doing. I talked to him. I told him, "You know, we're not trying to tell you what you have to do. We're not trying to take it over and do it for you. We just want to tell you that there are some things that you can do and these are the options. If you don't have it, you don't know what the opportunities are. We just want to provide to you what the options—what kind of things can happen out there. You decide what you want to have. You tell us what kind of help you need and when you want to have it happen, at the rate you want to have it happen. So you are in control. All we offer you is the things that are out there. There are some people, some places, where you need to take the technology, the advances. You've got to have people who are trained to use them, otherwise they're not going to happen. It's true with your hospitals. Your hospitals, you need better care. It's not just a matter of bringing the equipment in, it's a matter of being trained, people to use the equipment to provide the best opportunity." I told him, "That's what PICHTR is all about."

[Fujio] "Fudge" [Matsuda] went out, Doris Ching went out, and it took us two years and they were very concerned. Every time I saw them, they were saying, "We don't want to lose control. We don't want you to tell us what to do."

"No, I'm not going to tell you what to do." And they finally saw the light. That meeting that we had in Cook Islands, that's when the vice president was there. George [H.W.] Bush was there.

In that meeting, I became embarrassed because every leader went around the table and talked to me, telling me, “Oh Governor, it’s not your job but we very much appreciate what you have done for us and you made yourself available to us. We want to thank you.” Every leader did that. I started to get embarrassed because all the federal people were there too. That was the start of our relationship, beginning of PICHTR. I told them, “I did not want to start PICHTR until you folks wanted it.” That’s the meeting at Cook Islands they decided they wanted PICHTR. I received a letter [from the] ambassador to Fiji at that time. He’s now here in Hawaii. I have letter from him, after that meeting. I’ll try to get that letter. He indicated to me that he attended many, many meetings in the Pacific. But he said, “I never attended a meeting where one person played such a dominant role without wanting to play the dominant role.” Kay can get the letter for you.

TC: When you went to places like the Cook Islands, which are remote—they’re pretty undeveloped, they’re only minimally developed, the infrastructure is weak et cetera—how did you feel about the people? What was your sense of your relationship with the people involved?

GA: When you say “the people,” the masses of people, or [leaders]?

TC: Both.

GA: Okay. Sir Thomas Cook, I think his name was at that time, was the head of the Cook Islands. So I had a very good relationship with him. He used to come and consult with me, ask me about things that we were doing. I also had gotten very close to the people to the extent that we had contact, because Jeanie established a relationship with the queen. Jeanie got very close to the queen. During the time we were there, the queen was Jeanie’s personal escort, took her all over to look at all the parts of the Cook Island. Because of that, and because of my relationship with Sir Thomas Cook, I think that the contact that I made in the Cook Islands, became very warm and very cordial. I had great respect for the people. I felt they were very happy. Jeanie said, “No wonder the military when they came here they fell in love with the girls because the girls were very pretty girls, all pretty girls.” We had good contact with them.

After I left the governor’s office, the leadership changed. Long group of leaders after that, they kept on coming to me. They were telling me that after I left, the government no longer showed the kind of respect to their leaders, all the Pacific island leaders. They told me, “You know, we’re small countries. We may not mean very much, but we’re heads of state. We ought to be acknowledged as such.” When I was governor, when they had the meetings—and I helped create also the Pacific Island Development Corporation at the East-West Center and this was not American territory only but all the other island leaders. They all came together. Whenever we had those meetings, I hosted a lot of dinners at the house and invited all those leaders to come. So I treated them with respect and as leaders. All that was gone after I left. That’s what they came to see me about and told me that they are no longer respected. “Why do we come to Hawai‘i? We’re not given any kind of respect.”

MK: Hearing you say all this, it really punctuates the fact that Hawai‘i is a very unique state. The governor of Hawai‘i has a very unique responsibility in the Pacific.

GA: Not only the Pacific, but all over the islands. I think the governor of Hawai‘i meets more dignitaries than almost any other governor in the United States. They come and we treat them with respect and we try to be sure that they feel very comfortable. Because of that, I think that they have good feelings about Hawai‘i and about the United States. I think we are really ambassadors for the United States when it comes to its leaders.

Every nation you can think of, like Zhao Ziyang, who was prime minister (of China) when Tiananmen Square (demonstration started), he sided with the students and he was placed under house arrest. But before all that happened, he had come to Hawai‘i. We had a dinner for him. He really enjoyed that dinner. He went home—in fact Y.K. Pao was at the same table when he was there and I think he told him, “Did you know that Governor Ariyoshi can write his name in Chinese character, in *kanji*?” So he told me, “Can you write it for me?” On his name card I wrote it. Then he took my card and he wrote his name and we exchanged cards. (MK chuckles.) He had such a good time and he felt that he was treated respectfully.

TC: We need to change tape here.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: The camera’s on. Tape two. If you could continue your discussion where we left off.

GA: So Hawai‘i plays this kind of role. Because we do that, I think it’s good for America too. We have this opportunity. I’ve had this kind of chance. I was talking about China, yeah? Zhao Ziyang, when he went home he talked so much about his coming to Hawai‘i. When President Li at that time came to Hawai‘i, before he came he was asked what kind of dinner would you like to have. He said, “I want the same kind of dinner that was given to Zhao Ziyang.” So, we had that same kind of dinner for him. We had the king and queen, young king and queen of Nepal. They were here; they had such a nice time. They always wrote to us. “Come and visit us.” We never did that.

We had the same kind of relations with China. We used to go to the national governors’ meetings and we would get invited, Jean and I, before normalization, before the country was recognized, to go to the Chinese—it was not the embassy at that time. We would have lunch there. The other governors used to tell me, “How come? We can’t even go and visit that place and you folks get invited for lunch.” We had that kind of relationship.

But we had so much of these things happening in Hawai‘i, that kind of contact. It was very important that we did this.

TC: Do you think the fact that you were an Asian American governor and that Hawai‘i was substantially a large Asian American population improved their feeling about America? (Siren sounds.) I’m going to keep talking until the siren goes away.

(Laughter)

Improve their perception of America, changed the chemistry so—you know, it was not so long ago in some of these Asian countries where white people were colonialists and

oppressors and America was not firmly, you know was not in their camp. How does Hawai'i and a Japanese American governor fit in that picture?

GA: I think my answer is very definitely, my election as governor became very important to the people that felt that not Japanese only but Orientals be acknowledged in our country. So that was important. We had to take advantage of that. We couldn't assume that automatically it was going to bring about that kind of relationship. That's where Jeanie helped us so much. Jeanie was the one who was able to bridge that gap and made the people who come here feel so comfortable.

The King of Tonga came here. The first time he came, Jeanie went to see him at the airport. We had a nice Hawaiian dinner scheduled for him that evening. When she got to meet him and talk and met the queen and got very friendly with them, they talked about food. And Jeanie talked about, "Oh, tonight we have a nice Hawaiian dinner."

They were very candid. "Hoo, we hate Hawaiian food."

(Laughter)

Jeanie had to come back and change the menu. "What do you like?"

"We like Japanese food." So she came back and she had to change the whole menu.

(Laughter)

But that's what the role Jeanie played. She was able to make that kind of contact, make them feel very comfortable.

MK: Being non-white, was there a difference in accessibility when it came to meeting with these leaders of Asia-Pacific? Would it have made a difference if you were white?

GA: I think it would have. I think, number one, the beginning feelings they may not feel as comfortable. Maybe a little bit inferiority complex on their part, that they are something lower than a white person. For us, they didn't feel like that. But that was not enough. We had to do something about that where Jeanie became very helpful, instrumental in providing that kind of help.

TC: You just said something extraordinarily interesting, I think. You said something like the social equality that evolved in Hawai'i became a transition for Asians to approach white people with a sense of equality. I never heard that idea before. It's interesting. Could you elaborate on that a little bit?

GA: Yeah. I think that, especially during their stop here, they begin to feel this is America. They are on equal footing and they feel comfortable. You know, feelings are very important. If you feel you're going to do something and you feel that you're up to the task and you're okay, you don't have to worry about being inferior. You can talk about the things that we talked about. But that can play a secondary role if you got to first deal with, "I got to prove that I'm equal with you." They didn't have to do that in Hawai'i. And because of that, I think the feeling was they could go ahead and do things out there without having that inferiority complex. I had many requests from government leaders

about their going to Washington, about how maybe what kind of things they should be concerned about.

MK: Did it also work the other way too, State Department kind of working through you?

GA: Yes.

MK: To facilitate certain. . .

GA: Right. That was especially evident in the Marcos situation. Now, I'll tell you something that didn't happen. After Clinton got elected president, John Waihee wanted me to become ambassador to Japan. He was pushing pretty hard for me to do that. I stopped John. I stopped him because I felt that was not good for Japan, not good for America. And John said, "But *chee*, you have that relationship. The Japanese are going to feel very good about you being the ambassador."

I told him, "John, at the same time, how would Americans feel when an issue comes up Japan side or American side, kind of touchy issue, where am I going to be?" Whatever I do, one side might feel—America might feel, "He's Japanese American." At the Western Governors' meeting that was some of that kind of concern against me at one point. He's Japanese American, therefore he's taking that kind of position, which is pro-Japanese, even if that's not the reason for taking that position. That's how they might feel on this side. On the Japanese side, if I were to go along and talk about some things that I felt were important, the question is whether or not that's an American position, and whether it's because I'm Japanese that I am doing that. I feel that both sides would be in kind of a difficult position. Not generally, but enough people might have that kind of concern. That's why I told John, "Don't because I'm not going to accept. If it's offered to me, I'm not going to accept." On the surface it's like, oh, for Japan it's good. But it's not good for them, if whatever position I take or say is going to be questioned by some people in America and questioned, not because of the policy itself, but because I have happen to be Japanese American.

That's why when I see Gary Locke, governor of Washington and ambassador to China, I think to myself, "Why? It looks like it's the right person." And you're doing this as a favor to Chinese to acknowledge—you're providing the Chinese person. But how much weight does he carry because he's Chinese to the American people? There [may be] some American people who feel that is being too much pro-Chinese, or not being enough anti-Chinese on some of the policies or not speaking up enough.

TC: I haven't heard or read anything to that effect, but it's also not the type of thing that people say out loud.

GA: That's right, that's right.

TC: It also could be a mark of the progress that's been made in the last twenty years. Hard to say, very subjective.

GA: Yeah.

- MK: On the other side of the coin, being Japanese American, if you had been placed in that position, would you have thought Japan might have expected a little bit more from you to be more pro-Japanese?
- GA: That's right. That's the other part of the coin. If I didn't go along with some things that they felt they wanted, and couldn't because I felt it was not the right thing, in the balance between America and Japan, I take that position, they're going to feel let down. They're going to feel that why didn't I go along and do that? And maybe the white person might have said it's okay. Or a white person might not have felt like that.
- TC: Let me try that historically. Japan had a very strong sense of its immigrants going out in the world. They established large consulates and argued for voting rights for immigrants in new countries, who maintained the citizenship, dual citizenship, which wasn't so unusual. But there were a lot of ways in which Japan sort of clung to the overseas person of Japanese ancestry. Do you think that that's a legitimate criticism of Japan that they—the Japanese, Japan, the nation of Japan, did not more freely let go in that process, that global process, particularly in the process in its relationship to the United States?
- GA: I'm not sure I understand.
- TC: That's really a complicated question, sorry. Japan sort of hung on to Japanese who migrated to Hawai'i or to America in different ways, and was kind of reluctant to recognize that Japanese Americans had really become different people from Japanese. So is that a—if the other side of the coin, them wanting or expecting something from a Japanese American that they wouldn't expect from another American, is that a kind of reflection of Japan's continued sort of parochial view?
- GA: I don't know that Japan in any way expected anything from the Japanese who went overseas. But I know that there were some Japanese, not overall a feeling. But I have come across some Japanese who felt that the Japanese who came here were not outstanding Japanese. They were poor, they were farm people, low-class Japanese who came and they're not representing really the upper levels.
- TC: Okay.
- MK: It's an interesting topic, ethnicity and citizenship and nationality and how that all plays in and how it changes over time. But I think, Tom you had a question dealing with protest in Hawai'i.
- TC: Yeah, because we opened up the subject and I wanted to at least get in a general question. That year of protest, as you pointed out in your general reference, really began about the time—well, it had begun before you became governor but it was just really kicking up. In Hawai'i it was sort of a delayed reaction, but really kicking up in Hawai'i, with Waiāhole protests and Kaho'olawe and anti-war et cetera. You're sort of a respectful orderly person. How did you feel about the protests? I know on one thing a lot of different protests together, but how did you feel about the protest movement, generally?
- GA: I tried to look at why they were protesting and to try to see whether or not there were some valid reasons for their protesting. If they're doing that, they were exercising their

right to speak up and that was more volume, more people involved in that. So I tried to figure out whether or not there was something that could be done to take care about the protests. It's very easy to dismiss them and say, "Oh, the protesters." But I wanted to know: Is there a valid reason for their protest and can't we not do something about that? Even a small group of people having this feeling about what we are doing, complaining, saying that it's the wrong thing, in order for us to make things better, we need to look at segments of the community who feel very strongly about what is being done at the present time. You've got to ask the question: Is it legitimate? Do they have a right to do this? Can we make some adjustment in what we do in order to help them?

We couldn't do anything about the protests on the war because we had nothing to do about that. But Waiāhole, there was a lot of protest out there. The Kaho'olawe thing was very strong.

MK: In the Waiāhole conflict, you took a very active role. You negotiated the purchase of the Marks' land. Why so involved?

GA: Because it was the protest that resulted in us taking a look at the place. Windward Regional Plan came out, we looked at it. What's the future of Hawai'i? Is there someplace that can be kept relatively undeveloped but old Hawai'i? And the Windward Regional Plan acknowledged and recognized this was an area that perhaps something could be done. So in concert, that planning effort and the protests by the people out there, could have come together. We looked at the opportunity for us to end the protest by putting into effect a plan that would keep the area relatively undeveloped and agricultural. So it was not just doing something because of the protests, but it was because of that and because we felt this was something we could accomplish out there. I became very much involved in wanting to see that happen.

MK: I guess at that time you were kind of pushing the idea of stewardship. If you could speak a bit about that, your role with stewardship and the state.

GA: Stewardship, everything that we do, I think we all have to understand that we are stewards in one way or another, big ways or smaller ways. What we have to do is, we have to accept whatever we do, whatever pleasure or enjoyment we have, be sure that somebody out there doesn't use it all up. And be sure that those who follow will have that opportunity, a better opportunity, to enjoy the things that we have been enjoying. To me, that's the whole concept of stewardship. Do what you can to enjoy but be careful, be sure at the end, when you're all finished, that you leave that situation, that activity, in a better condition than you found it. So the whole planning effort centers around that effort. It's easy to think about yourself and what you want. Sometimes we forget that there are others who are going to want the same thing you have and they want it better than we were able to get it.

MK: I know that all of us here are parents, and when you say something like: You use something but at the end, after you've used it, you try to make sure that it's in a better shape than, as good or better shape than, it was before you used it. That's the kind of stuff that maybe I as a parent would say to our children as they're playing in a park or picnicking. I was wondering, growing up, is that something that your own parents would tell you in everyday life?

- GA: I think so. Mutuality comes into focus here. You've got to do things and you feel that somebody should also do things for you. So it's mutually helping, doing each others' kind of benefit, yeah?
- MK: Eventually you had the Hawai'i State Plan passed in '78. I've always been curious, to what extent has the state followed that plan that were developed for different facets of life?
- GA: During my time we followed it very carefully because every time we spent monies we were going to do any kind of program, I always asked the question—and every director knew that that question was going to come to them—how does it fit in to the state plan?
- MK: After your administration?
- GA: No. During my administration, all my directors—when the functional plan passed, we felt that it should be meaningful. I always asked the question, “How does what we are trying to do now fit in with the state plan and the direction we're talking about?”
- TC: I was thinking about the state plan. Yesterday I was having a conversation with a friend of mine. Our summary thought, revolves around the idea that the state plan kept people focused on the idea that we're living on an island, that our resources—we have to very carefully manage our resources.
- GA: We don't overflow on another island, another state. Ocean surrounds us. We can't go there.
- TC: Do you agree that was mainly the crux, if there's a single thing that organizes that whole process, that intense complicated process, but that was organizing aspect?
- GA: Yeah. But I was very lucky that it was not only me, but all my directors bought the idea and it was important. Because they did, all the contacts that they had, the people that they worked with, all came in too. They also believed. That's why we had so many people, every functional plan, so many people working at it. I didn't have to do anything after that. I left it all up to them, including trying to get the functional plan to pass the legislature. They went and they said, “It's not the governor's plan, it's our plan. We're the ones who worked on it. We understand what has to be done in terms of our future.” One of the really important concepts that came out of all that was: What's the carrying capacity? Carrying capacity became very important, everything that we did, you can apply it today. Tourism, what's our carrying capacity? Is there at some point you go beyond the carrying capacity, where people may feel Hawai'i no longer is a place you want to come?

When I became president of Prince Resorts, we tried to look at changing the make-up of the visitors to Prince Resort Waikiki. At that time it was predominantly—maybe 75 percent—Japanese visitors. Knowing that if we had a problem on the Mainland—we had strikes, yeah?—what would happen to Hawai'i if the visitors cannot come from Japan? I decided, and I talked to Yoshiaki Tsutsumi at that time. I told him I wanted half-half. He said good idea, go about doing it. As I started to go about doing it, people that made contact with the marketing effort on the Mainland, many people—when it got back to

me—they were saying they don't want to come to Waikīkī because it's too developed. They want to go to the neighbor islands instead. So the guests went to Mauna Kea and Maui and some of them did not want to come here because they felt we had exceeded our carrying capacity for tourism here. That's why it's very important.

Carrying capacity can be used in so many ways. What's our carrying capacity of big, wealthy kind of condominiums here? Everything we do becomes very important for us to look at what's our carrying capacity. It applies today just as much as it did during those days.

TC: How do you feel about these concepts being—not completely lost, but—they've been devalued or they've drifted out of focus in the subsequent years since you were governor? You had these concepts like really in focus. Then, it's drifted. How do you feel about that?

GA: Well, I think it's leadership. It cannot happen unless you have one person leading very strongly. What's the senator's name from the Big Island? Japanese, he became part of—he's department of agriculture now.

TC: Russell Kokubun.

GA: Russell Kokubun. When he started, I told Russell, "It's hard for you to do this because you don't have the staff. When I was governor, all my directors understood. They had the same feelings I had. If you don't have that at the administrative level, it's hard for you to do that because you don't have people who can go out and reach and bring people in." I feel it's a lack of leadership, that people just didn't feel that it was important.

TC: Do you think it reflected just some feeling that your leadership on this was tied to the idea of the uniqueness of Hawai'i? Do you think this lack of leadership is more, reflects a feeling, like we're just one of the fifty states?

GA: I think it's more, nobody's thinking about it. That's what it comes down to.

Yesterday I had a meeting here with some people who were talking about my foundation. They heard me one day say, "I'll do these things as long as I can, but I got to acknowledge that my age becomes a limitation." At some point I'm not going to be able to be involved in this kind of way. So there's this one group looking at my foundation, and maybe recreating that foundation and finding a way to finance it. They want to have it so that some thoughts will exist and there'll be people who will be there to talk about some of these things that are important. That conversation yesterday, when they talked about the foundation, I told them, "It's not only the foundation and it's not only the board for the foundation. You've got to have more people who can participate." So you've got to get people together who can put together a statement about the mission and after I'm gone, that mission will continue. What kind of things are important in Hawai'i, for Hawai'i's future? That's what I have them thinking now.

I'm looking at our foundation, I don't know, around five years or ten years, fifteen years might—my grandson tells me, "Grandpa, don't worry you'll be 100 years old." (Chuckles) But whenever I'm gone, and even if I'm alive, I may not be able to articulate

and participate in the kind of things that I'm now involved in doing. So I'm trying to find a way to get enough people involved in many different kind of ways.

MK: So your Hawai'i State Plan, that sort of captured the mission. Right? Articulated the mission and different aspects of the life of the state. And you're saying that it was very important for you to have directors or cabinet members who could carry out the plan—be on the same page and carry out the plan. I'm curious, how did you select your directors?

GA: They were not selected on that basis. I selected them on the basis they could be very competent in the department they were going to serve in. But I also wanted—not technologists, technicians—but I wanted good people with a broad point of view. If you look at all my directors, every person that I selected, they were not only people who were good in their department, but good with people who understood the need to have compassionate feelings. Every single department director, when I think about what they are today, those who are not that inclined, I talked to them. We talked to make them aware of the importance. Even judges, I have very strong feelings about judges. Not only that they be competent—they have to be competent in the law—but they've got to be compassionate. They've got to have an understanding of what happens in our community and how we do and look at things. They cannot divorce that from the law. So same thing. Directors got to do their job well, but they've got to be good people. They've got to be compassionate. They've got to understand and feel for Hawai'i, beyond what the average person feels for Hawai'i.

MK: I was wondering, as a manager of these people, what kinds of directives did you give them, besides being good at your job, being compassionate?

GA: When they first came in? That's what I talked about. I'm selecting them because I know they're going to do a good job. Number one, that has to be done but don't forget Hawai'i's people. When you execute, remember that we may do things very differently here in Hawai'i because our people are different, because we do things differently. You cannot divorce yourself from the way in which we do things, the understanding that people have about who we are. That has to be part of the job that you do.

MK: I was also curious about your relationship with the legislature. How did you deal with the legislature? You needed them to be with you.

GA: During the time I was there, [James] Wakatsuki, the speaker, Henry Peters, we had many discussions about Hawai'i. They understood, had very strong feelings about how we do things in Hawai'i and how here things are maybe very different. And we've got to understand the Hawaiian way of doing things. I was very lucky.

Remember I talked about young people. Wow, when I think about the people I had in my office. Gary Caulfield, he's the head of IT here at the bank now. Dan Ishii. I had Brad Mossman. Brad Mossman, he's really a financial wiz now. He works at the company that I'm co-founder of now. He was the first student who became a regent at the Punahou board of regents. We had, Carl Takamura he was in the legislature, Japanese person. His wife is a dean of social work at Columbia. Mufi Hannemann was there. The people that I had, oh they were so good. They were the ones who helped me go and keep contact with the department. They were the ones who came back and told me the things that were

happening. But they knew that they were not to interfere with administration. They were not to do anything to cut the directors. Let me know if they have some concerns. They did. They came back to me, expressed some concerns to me. We met with the department directors and let them know what concerns were being expressed to me.

MK: You referred to this group and this group of young people. Did you specifically seek out these younger people?

GA: To help in the office, yes I did. Some of those people—Gary Caulfield, Dan Ishii, started to get involved with the legislative program at the university. What's the representative's name, senator's name, in Mānoa? He beat Carol Fukunaga.

WN: Brian Taniguchi.

GA: Brian Taniguchi, yeah. Brian was one of the interns also. He helped in the Queen Emma project when they were going to be displaced. Where the parking lot is now, by the department of education building, up to the freeway, used to be Vineyard Boulevard over there. While they were being displaced, Brian was there to help them so that nobody really—and they understood they had to get out. The expansion was taking place.

I was so lucky. Guy Fujimoto. Is that his name, Fujimoto?

MK: Fujimura.

GA: Fujimura, yeah. ILWU. Guy's father [Takuji Fujimura] was very important in the land department. He was a fisheries expert.

MK: Sand Island.

GA: So I was so lucky I had good people. Susumu Ono, what a gem. Susumu Ono was a person who knew more about government and understood government and understood people too. He was my chief of staff and he'd come talking to me about some of the things that were going on. I treasured his advice. Even after the governorship, he continued to be involved, coming to me and talking about the community, some concerns that he saw out there. His passing was really a big loss to me.

Sus, he would tell me, "We have some very good division chiefs but they've been at their jobs very long. Hard for them to change what they're doing. We've got to change some of those things." So Sus and I talked about that and we said if Sus is telling me that they're not doing well because they're incompetent, not much I can do about that but you're telling me that they're very good but everything around them has changed and they're not able to change fast enough, then maybe we can do something about that. The something we could do was take the good people and put them in another job. Put them in another job, so now it's not what they were doing yesterday, but what they're going to do today and tomorrow, they've got to think about what has to be done in this new position that they have. [They've got to think about] what they're doing today, but how it's going to be made better. That's how I took advantage of good people in government, shifted them around. Sus was so valuable in identifying some of these people for me.

MK: How did these people take to their shifting—taking out of one department?

GA: Oh, they did very well. They were put on the basis of “We’re not taking you out. We’re putting you in some place where we hope you can make this thing better.” So it’s a new challenge to them. It’s not being critical about what they were doing, but saying to them, “You’re so good, that we’re picking you out now and we want you to help us improve that area.”

MK: You brought young people into your administration and you had been in office, first as a legislator, then eventually as governor from the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties. I was wondering, in all those decades, what kinds of changes did you see in, say, legislators, or people in government? That’s a long time to be around to observe.

GA: I think the biggest difference is that we were willing to listen to each other. We acknowledged that people can have different feelings based upon their own background, their own work experience. To me it’s so important to understand that people can be different. It’s so important to let that person feel, “You don’t have to change, but having that kind of background and having that kind of feeling, this problem can work out for the best.” That feeling at the legislature: during that time it wasn’t a question of, “You my friend so you got to come along with me. It was you my friend, because of that I respect you and you can keep your own ideas; but let’s work together. Let’s make something together. The ideas that you have and the ideas that I have, what can we do?” I think that’s a big difference today.

MK: You know, long time ago I interviewed Akira Sakima. He grew up in Kalihi Valley, son of pig farmers.

GA: Pig farming background.

MK: And never went to college, just high school grad.

GA: Smart boy.

MK: Then when he was in the legislature, in the beginning people were sort of like him. You know, humble backgrounds, maybe not that much school. Maybe some people had a college education. But as the years went by, he said, “We started getting people like [Neil] Abercrombie. Oh, they’re so smart, so fancy.” Did you observe that kind of change where people are more schooled (chuckles)? Different from before?

GA: I don’t think it’s because of “more schooled” because if I said that then I would be saying that it’s intelligence, yeah? I think the people who were there, a lot of common sense and intelligent. They knew what was happening in their community. They knew what kind of things they wanted to do. It was important for them to get some direction too. I think during that time, they had very, very good direction.

You know Jim Wakatsuki? Jim was a thinker. Jim could almost outthink most legislators. He wanted to do something, he knew how to do that and he knew what kind of obstacles were going to come along the way and how to deal with it. So he had great following. His people really believed and followed him.

MK: They used to call him “*‘opihi*,” yeah?

GA: Yeah. (MK chuckles.) Because he was very tight. He was chairman of the ways and means committee at one time. He knew what had to be done. He was a tremendous—I got very close to Jim. I had great respect for him and he was very candid with me on what he felt.

A group cannot be together on all the thinking. It’s not good. If you tell the group that because you’re part of my group, this is what you’ve got to do, you’re losing out on all the change that can take place. You’re not utilizing their talent that exists there. That’s what I think we, the old-time legislators had. We were willing to acknowledge that we didn’t know it all, that there were some people who had some ideas that were important and we ought to consider them. Not listen to them completely but take into consideration and maybe work it out into ideas that we had.

MK: When you look back in history, it’s like in the 1950s the Democratic party really had a cause. How about afterwards? You’ve seen it all.

GA: What happens at the legislature? It’s a problem someplace in the community somebody has and they bring it to the legislature to take a look at it to fix it. But I think what is really important is doing all these things in the context of what you want in the future. Easy to fix a problem that exists there. But you’ve got to ask the question, “If you do this thing, in a certain kind of way, is it only to fix this problem or will it create more problems? What do we need to do in the long haul because that’s where we want to get to? Not that specific getting there like that but generally the kind of Hawai‘i you want to have. I think maybe that’s what’s missing. Even in terms of budget. When they worked the budget out, it’s trying to work it out so they can balance the budget now. But what are we balancing the budget now so that you don’t create the problems four or five years from now? I think long term and short term become very important. My director said that. So everything that they did, it was not just fixing it but it’s doing it for the future.

MK: With the state plan you had an eye to the future.

GA: Yeah.

MK: Since we’ve talked about the cabinet, we’ve talked a little bit about the legislature, I’m curious about your lieutenant governors. Your relationship with Governor Burns was a very close one and it was like mentor and mentee. What was it like for you with, say, Nelson Doi?

GA: (Chuckles) I had known Nelson Doi for a long time. After the ’66 election, ’67 session, when they were organizing fifteen democrats, seven on one side led by Nelson Doi, seven on the other side led by Najo Yoshinaga and I was right in the middle. Because of that, both sides appointed me as the caucus chair for me to try to see if I could bring everything together. I couldn’t because they were very rigid. Nelson was very rigid, very much anti-Yoshinaga. Almost everything was colored by his seeing red when anything Najo wanted to do. I acknowledged that Najo was very liberal, very foresighted, but that he had his faults also. Sometimes he wanted to ram, rush out to the people. I saw that and I tried to work in that context.

Nelson Doi offered me the presidency, but only if I would squeeze out Yoshinaga. I told him, "I can't do that and I will not accept under those circumstances." So they went ahead to organize. They really gave me almost nothing to do with the legislature. I accepted that and I thought I could participate but I had that [experience] with Nelson.

I know he gives many speeches about principles and how things are important, but I knew that there were legislative decisions I'd make guided by what he felt was necessary. When he became my lieutenant governor, I really wanted Dan Akaka. Dan didn't make it; Nelson won. So I got to deal with Nelson. I told Nelson how I dealt with Governor Burns. And I'd be very happy to work with him. Then he went ahead, decided he wanted to become mayor. So two years later, 1974 election, when he got to lieutenant governor, 1976 he wanted to run against Frank Fasi for mayor. That two years almost became totally campaigning. After he lost the '76 election, he blamed me for his defeat. So I didn't have a lot of help from Nelson Doi.

My next lieutenant governor was Jean King. I wanted to work together with her. She talked about wanting to help me and do whatever has to be done, but it was all for Jean King. I told her, "It's not for George Ariyoshi, it's for our state, our community. That's the help that I want." But whatever she did, she wanted to be sure it was to help her, make her look good. At that time, I have a feeling she was also thinking about running for governor. So she was not a big help to me. It was more because I could not depend on her. Jean is a bright girl. She's bright but it's not how smart you are, it's how you are willing to take that smartness you have, and make things happen.

Many years later, she ran against me in 1980—no '82. In 1982 she ran against me. She didn't make it. She ran several years later for Congress and she didn't make it. She wanted my help and I couldn't help her. She came to see me many years after that one day. I had an appointment. Jean King, she came back and she told me, "Governor, do you have anything you want to say to me?"

I told her, "No, I don't have anything I want to say you. This is your appointment. You wanted to come to see me."

She told me, "I wanted to apologize to you for some of the things that I did." One of the things she did was to take advantage of my registration, registration to vote, run for reelection and I had to go to the office. She used that opportunity to come out, take my hands and would not let go, and challenge me to a debate (chuckles).

WN: I remember that (chuckles).

GA: Jean King was not very helpful during my—and then, John Waihee. John came. I told John, "John, do you want to help? I welcome help. I've not gotten help from my other lieutenant governors." So he said he wanted to help me.

John became my lieutenant governor. He was very helpful. At that time, the mayor of Honolulu was Eileen Anderson. She had become mayor in 1980. I encouraged her to run for mayor because in our conversations she indicated to me that she was very concerned about how the city was being run. I told her, "Oh, you can do a really good job as mayor because of what you did to help me." She ran and she got elected. She asked me after she

got elected whether she could take Andy Chang, who was my social services and housing director. Andy's a good person, I said, "You take him." And he would become her managing director and did a good job. Andy was very good. But because of that I felt at some point she might be a good successor to me. She would have been if she had not lost in 1984. But she lost that bid.

That's a whole story about her losing that election, re-election. She should not have, but she did. What's the person name? Awana? Akana?

TC: Bob Awana.

GA: Bob Awana became her campaign director. He just put his arms around Eileen and would not let her move around. Even people who worked for her campaign in 1980 and got her elected, my own people, they were made to feel very uncomfortable. As a result, they had to stay away. When Eileen called me and told me she needed help eight days before the election, if I could come and give a speech. I told her I'd come but "I think it's too late, Eileen."

TC: After it was over, and it was something of a debacle, political debacle, some of the people around her then blamed you for that, getting her re-elected, as if it were your responsibility. Could you give your take on that?

GA: I heard about that, but it was not Eileen herself saying that. Some of the people who were not involved in our campaigns, some of those people, feeling that oh, they didn't get any help from us. They forgot that they were the ones who wanted to be in control. They didn't want our help. People who worked for me, my directors, they went and they came back and said, "Gee, they didn't want us around. They can do without us." That's what Eileen lost. But Eileen wanted to become governor, to succeed me. I thought she would be, at one point, she'd be a very good person to succeed me.

But then John Waihee happened to come along. She wanted me to tell John Waihee to stay out of the race. I said, "Eileen, I can't do that. I'm going out. You folks have to be strong enough to be able to make it without my help. My people are going to be around. They are going to be helping wherever they can. You're going to get a lot of help from them, Eileen, because you were there working together with them." But she decided that she did not want to buck head with John Waihee. So she wanted to run for lieutenant governor. That's when she wanted me to get involved in her campaign, work up an organization. She wanted me to find her campaign man in Maui. I told Eileen that I never did it for myself. I never found my campaign manager, my people did. They were the ones who found the person they thought would be right for Maui. Pundy Yokouchi in that group. So I said, "You know what? That's not the kind of thing I do. I feel uncomfortable being in that kind of campaign effort." So that's the other thing that some of her people blame me for when she didn't make it in the race for lieutenant governor.

MK: I'm thinking that maybe we should stop now. We promised Kay that we would not keep you beyond twelve. It's getting near twelve but maybe we should stop here.

GA: I'm okay. You don't have to worry.

MK: (Chuckles) It's okay. If you can talk a bit about your relationship with John Waihee, when he was lieutenant governor.

GA: John was very helpful when I was lieutenant governor.

TC: Let's give it a few more minutes. Governor, wants to keep going.

MK: Okay.

TC: We can mop up this local politics stuff. Your relationship with John.

MK: If you'll speak about your relationship with Lieutenant Governor Waihee.

GA: John came to me and he told me, "I really want to help." By 1978 election, Us Guys for Hawai'i, group of young people, John was part of the group. A lot of law students came together and they got involved in heading that organization, Us Guys for Hawai'i, very, very good people. I liked the idea that these people were law students, that they were bright. They got involved in the campaign. But I thought they're going to get involved later on in their own ways, in making the state better. So I really welcomed them.

When John became lieutenant governor, when he expressed the desire to be useful, I wanted to help. I wanted to make him become a very useful politician in Hawai'i. We worked very close together. I told John, I said, "John, you are free to go to any cabinet, any department, if you see something you go and you come and tell me what you want to do. You got to tell me what you want to do because maybe I don't want you to do, move everything in a certain kind of way. I want you to understand that my cabinet has a great deal of latitude. I don't tell them specifically what they should be doing. I want them to use the best judgment. They are expensive. We pay them good salaries. It would be a waste of monies if I started dictating to them how they should be doing their jobs. I'm not getting the maximum I can of them. In fact, what I want is for them to tell me what they want to do and how they're going to go about doing it to do the best job for Hawai'i's people. John, with that caution, you go and you're free to talk to any cabinet member you want." And I gave him that kind of leeway.

John was very good. He didn't go and tell them you've got to change. He expressed concerns about some things that maybe were not being done, had to be done. I liked that relationship.

TC: Okay, I think that kind of completes. Then we can—our goal for the next time is actually to make the next one wrap up. Although, that goal keeps alluding us because it's so interesting, Governor.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-24-15-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George R. Ariyoshi (GA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

October 31, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

MK: This is an interview with Governor George Ariyoshi on October 31, 2012, Halloween in Honolulu, O'ahu. The interviewers are Tom Coffman, Warren Nishimoto, and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. As I said before, we're at the end of your term. I know that in Tom's and your autobiography of yourself, you speak of last day in office and what it was like. If you can tell us what that last day and evening was like for you.

GA: Well, that last day I was approached by the press and specifically they wanted to know what I was going to be doing after I left the governor's office. They had in mind that I would want to become trustee for the Bishop Estate because I think that was the biggest plum at that time. So they asked me, "What's your feeling about Bishop Estate trusteeship?"

I told them, "I'm not interested."

They said, "Oh, but now that you're leaving the office maybe you've had a change of heart." I told them my reason for not wanting to get appointed was because I appointed supreme court justices [who are responsible for the selection of the Bishop Estate trustees] and I think it's very wrong for me to approach the people who I appointed and have them feel they're obligated to return the favor to me. So that's the reason why I said very specifically that I will not seek an appointment. Then they told me, "Oh but now that you're leaving the office maybe you have some different feelings."

I told them, "No. I'll go one step further. I will tell you now, not only will I not seek the offer, but if for some reason I am asked to serve—appointed—I will decline the appointment because the circumstances have not changed. I still appointed the people and I will not go to them and I will not burden them with trying to pass judgment on me."

That's basically what happened the last day I was there. The last evening that I was there, the night before the last day, I sat at my desk and did everything that I had to do. I normally stayed up till about twelve o'clock, twelve-thirty, even sometimes later, to finish up my work. That evening, I had work that I had to complete and get out of the way. So I did that that evening. Then I started to reflect on the things that have happened. I thought about whether or not I had justified my being present there, if I had done the things that I felt necessary that I had to do. I told Jeanie, "I've given it all. I've done

everything I can to do the things necessary and I'm not going to stop. Even now, today, this evening, I'm going to finish up my work so there's nothing left for somebody else to pick up from me."

Day and evening I began to reflect on whether or not there were things that I should have done, things that maybe needed to be done, especially to think about what's going to happen after I'm gone. You know, I was very instrumental in campaigning very hard for John Waihee that last week. I stepped into his campaign when he was behind by about 30 percent. I did that because I felt that he was the best person who could take over the work that needed to be done. I made that judgment because of his involvement as lieutenant governor. John Waihee was the one who really offered to work very hard, work very close with me. So that's the decision I made. One of the things I wondered about, did I make that right decision? I felt good about having supported John. I felt good that he would be the person who could continue the work that I had done. The future was very important. The future was not going to stop when I left the office.

I also thought about what are we going to be doing the next day. The next day I had decided I was going to come down to the office. They had an office space for me—Kobayashi and, at that time, Jeff Watanabe. The firm was together and they had an office space there for me. So the next morning, I got up and at eight o'clock in the morning I was at my office.

MK: So you took no break.

GA: You see, I felt it was important for me to start getting the work—get used to right away. Because if I took even a day off, it would be one day off, maybe another day, maybe another day. That's a very easy practice to get into. But I decided I was not going to do that. The new day starts with a new office. I was going to start brand new, early in the morning, without any delay.

MK: You mentioned that you had reflected on your governorship. Time has passed since then.

TC: Let me just insert one little thing in this transitional—I remember that you, at one point, you told me that at the end of that day as you were clearing up all your desktop and your paperwork, and I think by that point you were over at Washington Place with Mrs. Ariyoshi, that you did have a moment where you felt this tremendous sense of completion. Also just feeling drained. I thought that was interesting. You talk about the next morning you went to work but there was a moment in there. I wonder if you could talk about that, Governor.

GA: I felt the burden had been lifted. I felt once I let go I never felt like that before. Every day I'm working until twelve o'clock, twelve-thirty, one o'clock in the morning. I was up at seven o'clock for breakfast meetings and I never felt very tired, never felt drained, but when I came to the end, I did feel just a little drained as I had given it all. (Sighs) (Pause) Drained, the feeling that I felt that I had given it all I could give. I personally could not have done more than I did.

MK: When you were kind of reflecting in your mind about your governorship, were there any specific incidents or decisions that came to mind as you thought, “Did I do what I could?”?

GA: No. Not anything specific. But I think a person who is so tied up in the work that he or she has been doing, when they leave, at the point that they leave, they have to wonder whether or not everything that they did, all the things that they tried to do, came about okay. It’s not only up to the leader, it’s up to people who are motivated to carry the work that needs to be done. Even when I was there, very important for the people who worked very close with me, [Susumu] “Sus” Ono and Wayne Minami and my attorney general, all the people who were there, to have felt the need, every day, for them to pick up what has to be done in implementing the policies that I’d set forth for them. I know they must have felt the same way, too. They tried to do everything they can, especially Sus, Sus Ono. He was my valued and very trusted employee. I know that Sus must have felt the same. I never talked to him. But he must have felt the same way. I gave it my all but was that enough? Was there something that we didn’t do that maybe we should have done? Nobody can really say absolutely for certain that everything that they wanted to do came about the way you wanted it to happen. You got a feeling that, oh, maybe some things were not done as completely as we would have liked or we were in process and not yet complete. I hope that the process will continue and policies would be put into effect. It doesn’t come to an end. Somebody will take over and then everything else begins there—certain amount of carrying over that somebody has to pick up.

MK: So when Governor Waihee took office, what were the things that he picked up, or you hoped he would pick up?

GA: I wanted fiscal responsibility. I wanted a person in that context to be forward-looking. Not only think about the problems today, now, but look at what needs to be done in order to get the kind of future that you want to have. My hope was that John would continue looking ahead, not just solving problems for today.

John called me quite often after I first left the office. He called me to bounce things off me and ask me what I thought of certain circumstances. So I had a very close relationship with John when he started off.

MK: What was your advice to Governor Waihee? Just as Governor Burns had told you, “Be your own man.” What did you say to Governor Waihee?

GA: He and I had a lot of conversations during the time he was my lieutenant governor. He knew that I gave him a lot of flexibility and leeway, that he could do things in his own way and the politicking part of how you go about doing it is up to him and his style. So he understood very clearly that I was not going to demand that he do things my way. That was the way we worked together. I didn’t have to say very much to him at that point. All I had to say to him was, “Be fiscally responsible. Remember that there are good days, good years, and it’s going to be followed by tough years too. You got to look at not just this year, but you got to look ahead.” I told him also, “Hope you will not forget the future.”

- MK: When we think about all the governors who have followed you, you were the first Japanese American governor in Hawai'i, talk about what that means to yourself and to everyone else.
- GA: I think I had two basic responsibilities. One was to do my best job as possible as governor serving the people of Hawai'i and doing the programs that were very important. The other was my responsibility as a Japanese American to leave behind a legacy that would make it possible for others to say, "I want to follow in that footsteps." Also, to leave a legacy that would make it possible for people to, in fact, be able to come in. In other words, be successful in the work so that people will not be bogged down by my failures, by lack of success.
- MK: When you think about the time that you got in to elected office, first as a legislator, then lieutenant governor, then governor—you're second generation, you're nisei, nisei are still very much a part of our communities—what did you see as your role in dealing with the generations?
- GA: Not only in terms of the Japanese Americans but in terms of future people of Hawai'i. When I talk about the future, I'm talking about a community in which the future people are going to be living. Not my life, but others. I think we need to be flexible in what kind of life they're going to be living. But most importantly, that we provide for them the basic things that make it possible for them to have choices for doing things into the future. I think that my thought was, John Waihee was another generation. He was in his early forties when he got elected. His group of law students from the university became very important in that process. My hope was that maybe I inspired enough of them to get involved to get the feeling that they have a responsibility and they have a right to be involved in the creation of that future. My hope was that there were many others that I had worked with, people like Daniel Ishii and Tom—he's with First Hawaiian Bank now. He's an IT person. Gary.
- MK: Gary Caulfield.
- GA: Gary Caulfield, yeah. And all the others who worked with the young people I had. Those young people, I had to say to them, "Look, you've got to graduate from university. I don't want to be the reason you don't graduate. Graduation and getting your college education is very important if you are going to be serving in the future. Not necessarily serving in government, but having the mindset that you feel you want to continue to participate in what happens in our state." So I thought about those young people too, my hoping that I had done enough with them so they would be motivated enough, so that even after I'm gone, that they would continue to be involved in trying to influence the path of the future.
- TC: At some point in our interviews when we got over to talking about the attitudes that you brought to being an elected governor, one of the things you said was that you did feel that a burden of history that you would, in the most traditional Japanese terms, not bring shame, that you would not somehow screw up, that you would pull this off in such a way that everybody could move forward. So like from a very Japanese point of view and I'd like to see if you could talk about that a little more.

GA: And that word is *haji*, shame. Don't bring shame to those who are close to you, your family and friends. The other part of that is to be very honorable so that you don't bring shame to people. I think that was a very important part of the work that I did and how I did it.

I also felt very strongly about what Governor Burns told me about running for office and why he wanted me to get involved. He wanted me to be there so that I could open up opportunities for other people by getting elected. But getting elected was only part of the process. It's how you serve. If I got elected and I made people feel that now the others can come in, but I screwed up, if I did the things that were not appropriate, good as governor, I would not really fulfill that responsibility that I felt I had to subsequent generations. If I had, for example, done a terrible job as governor, I think John Waihee would have had a very difficult time trying to get elected as governor to follow me. So that's the obligation when I talk about two things that were heavy on me: doing my job and doing it in a good way and doing the best job that I possibly can; secondly, the need for me to do it in a way that people would not feel ashamed, would not feel that they were let down, would not feel that, "Ah, he came in and look what he did to us," and make it difficult for somebody else to follow in my path.

TC: Just one more question in this vein. That year John Waihee transitioned and Ben Cayetano was elected lieutenant governor. From sort of a community development standpoint, in a lot of ways it was the Hawaiians who were mobilized after statehood, had been in this sort of long term stagnation and decline. They mobilized in the seventies and John was part of that mobilization before he got down to the state capitol. In a lot of ways that has such a separate history. I think a lot of people have a hard time integrating that history with the history that you're talking about. But in your personal experience, through John, you certainly did. I'm just wondering how you saw that like he was first a native Hawaiian leader before he was a statewide leader, you know?

GA: When I thought about John—I think back now—I thought about John as a person who was very open, a person who welcomed ideas and who, at the same time, felt very strongly about being Hawaiian, which was important also. I felt strongly about being Japanese because I didn't want to cast especially shame on Japanese who can, not necessarily become governor, but Japanese in the community doing anything that they were doing, that they would be respected because I performed in a way—I felt the same way with John that was important.

We were talking before then [about] all the problems that face our community, the Hawaiians are a major part of the problem. The Hawaiians were—more people in jail, for example, All kinds of bad we were talking about, Hawaiians are involved in. I felt it was important for John to come in now. He can be an example for the people who are in trouble, not being very successful, but who can become an inspiration to them. That's how I looked at John.

When I saw him being very open—you know, John was very creative, too. He had a knack of getting people together. He proved that when he became a leader in Con-Con [Constitutional Convention], when he was able to get people together. The Hawaiian movement to me was also very important. With or without OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs] or anything that's going to happen, the Hawaiians were entitled to certain

benefits under the law—ceded lands, United States government acknowledge that. Our constitution provided for Hawaiian ceded rights. So for me, it was very important that these people have a leader who can take the core people and march forward, taking these benefits and improving the lot of the Hawaiians. That's how I saw John Waihee at that particular time.

TC: Ben was positioned, although it was like eight years away but he was on a run for statewide office. He was from a group that similarly had been more on the margin. I wonder how you saw that. It's quite a lot more remote from you.

GA: I think the same thing that I felt about John about the Hawaiians, applies to Ben with the Filipinos. The only thing is, I'm not sure that Ben felt that responsibility of being Filipino an obligation, the need to help, uplift, and better the Filipinos in the community. I didn't have that sense. As he performed as governor, I continued to have that sense about maybe he wasn't that committed to the Filipino people, that he had that responsibility. Not to favor the Filipinos against everybody else, but to try to bring them up, to talk to them in a way to let them know that they can fully participate in the community. I tried to do that when I was governor, not only Japanese, but Hawaiians and Filipinos and everybody else. I told them, "You don't have to become like somebody else, you remain the person you are. You can participate in the community. You take care of yourself and improve your ability to do things in the community. You can reach out like everybody else. Reach out. Don't put a barrier over yourself by saying that you are somehow ashamed of being who you are, that this being who you are holds you back because you're putting your own barrier on what you can achieve. Once you start thinking like that, you're going to be reluctant. You can't reach out in the ways that you want to reach out."

I don't have a feeling that Ben felt like that. I think with Ben it was more everything coming for him and he has to decide what he has to do. I think he went ahead with the idea that he's a very strong person, that he had the courage, he's not afraid, he can do anything he wants. But that's very different from taking a different kind of approach with the people who need an uplift. I think that he had opportunity that I didn't have.

The Filipinos were, in my time, just beginning to become professional people. Most of the Filipinos before then were plantation workers and children of plantation workers. They were not really coming up, not very many. Very few lawyers, very few doctors. Towards the end of my term, I began to see new Filipinos coming, the professional people coming. I felt that it was really an opportunity for somebody, Ben, to take those Filipino people, professional people, and talk to them and tell them they have a responsibility to not only their profession, but they have a responsibility to the community, especially the Filipino community, to help bring them up, to inspire them, to let them feel that they can reach out in this community. I do not feel that that happened.

TC: Interesting comment. Governor Burns—there was a story which you probably heard, but I think Pundy [Yokouchi] told the story when he went to see Governor Burns in the hospital. When he came out he said something about how Governor Burns said he was elated that George Ariyoshi had become elected governor and that who knows, maybe after that there would be a Hawaiian governor and then even a Filipino governor, which is putting back in time.

GA: That's what he mentioned to me.

TC: He said that to you as well?

GA: Yeah. If you get elected you're going to break the cycle, and maybe going to have a Hawaiian or Filipino person coming in.

TC: Doesn't that seem almost eerie in retrospect, or prophetic?

GA: Yeah. That night of the general election, I waited until the results started to come in and I waited until I was certain that I was going to be elected. Normally, I would go to the campaign headquarters right away. I didn't. Everybody was waiting for me but I went to the hospital. I went to see Governor Burns. I told him, "Thank you very much for everything you've done for me."

His response was, "Don't thank me. I want to thank you for making my dreams come true." Then he told me, "Lots of people waiting for you. You better go." He didn't want me to spend a lot of time there with him. He felt I should go meet my campaign workers.

I just want to say, I'm not being critical of Ben Cayetano for the work that he did. As governor, I think he tried to do the very best that he could. That's it. My only concern is, besides being governor, what could he have done a little bit more to affect the Filipino community and to inspire them and to make them feel that they have a part in the community. It belongs to them also. That's the part I think, narrow part, that I felt that maybe could have done more.

MK: I know that there's a story in your autobiography of you having students, young students, visiting your office, and how you would invite them to sit in your chair. If you could share that with us.

GA: I had visitors, young people, students from high school, and I think Jeanie did this also. People who visited the capitol, she always invited them to Washington Place. Washington Place was a very busy place. Young people, a lot of them would come to see me after that. When they'd come to my office, that formal office, the first thing I would do is ask, "How many of you would like to sit in my chair?" Many hands would go up. At the very beginning kind of slow, but once one person would raise their hand, everybody would raise their hand. So I let them come, sit. Many people came and sat too. I told them, "You know, you sit in this chair and it means to me that maybe you can become governor too. Any person in Hawai'i can now become governor. That's what I want you to feel. But you can't become governor unless you have some talent. Everybody has talent but you've got to develop those talents. I want you to study hard and develop yourselves so that you can maybe come and sit in this chair." That's what I tried to use, that kind of opportunity. Let them know that they have the opportunity but they've got to do something themselves.

MK: That was one way in which you actually inspire individuals.

GA: Yes.

MK: Now we have President Barack Obama, ethnically mixed, a person who had grown up here in the islands. I'm wondering—I don't know if you can answer this but—how do you think his growing up here in the islands, having a governor who's of Japanese ancestry, then knowing that his state had a governor of Hawaiian ancestry, followed by one of Filipino ancestry, have an impact on him and his career?

GA: I don't know that. It's hard for me to answer because I don't know how he felt. But I'm not sure that while he talks about being from Hawai'i, I've not seen a single demonstration of him being affected by in some ways because of his growing up here. I think about that sometimes, I can't think. . . I think it is more his growing up in Chicago that kind of helped him form himself.

I consider Hawai'i to be a very special place, a place where every person can have the opportunities. Where I don't see it, I try to encourage them and tell them, "The opportunities are there for you, everybody. You don't have to become like somebody else. You remain the person you are. In your own way, in your own language, your own culture, don't be afraid to be proud of that. When you do that, you can succeed better. You try to do something and you got to copy and do it my way, you're not going to be as good as if you try to do it your own particular way." That to me is a very special thing about Hawai'i. I've not seen that in the president. (Pause)

I don't know if others have, but we're talking very personal feelings and talents looking at 'em and that's what—I'm not talking about his policies. I'm not talking about the work that he does. But I'm talking about how we look at each other here in Hawai'i. To me, that's a very important part of how the country should be looking at each other. It's not a question of saying I'm going to support the Hispanic policy, I'm going to support black because I happen to be black. It's not that. It's more than that. It's not the policies, but the people who are there and encouraging people and trying to get people to understand that it doesn't make any difference what your color is, doesn't make any difference whether you're from a rich family or a poor family. In America, every person has the opportunity to develop their talent. That's the responsibility every person and individual has. You do that and you have a chance to participate in things. That's the part I think is very important. That what I think leaders forget about. It's the individual people.

You know, Governor Lingle now talks about oh, she's for people. But I think about that and what has she done for people? Doing for people is telling the individual, down here, this is not this person. This person, this person, all, making every person feel that they're important and they have responsibility also. They have to do whatever they can to improve themselves. If they do that, then they have a chance to participate with everybody else. That's what I see lacking today.

The foundation comes from each person in our community striving to do better and wanting to participate. That's why I go to high schools. I talk when they ask me to come. That's why I'm going to the law school. Because I want them to feel that they have developed their own talent. Now, I want them to be sure they use those talents and come back to the community and try to help the community in ways that are important. They've got to understand what Hawai'i has been through and where we are today. To really be able to focus on the things that they need to concentrate and think about.

When I speak to them, I'm not going to give them all the answers. But I'm going to tell them about things that happened and why things were done in a certain kind of way. Why we felt it was important for us to have the Land Use Commission. Why we felt it was very important to be fair and what fairness really means—not taking care of your friends only but taking care of even people who are not your friends. That's the kind of thing I want to talk to them about so that they understand that the future depends on them doing the things that are important to our community. But they've got to adapt. They've got to look at it. They've got to say, "Our community now is like this. What can we do to be sure that we don't destroy the future?"

MK: It's clear that going through all these interviews you've always had an eye to the future, but you've always been informed by the past.

GA: The past gives us a lesson. It tells us some of the things that you've got to do. I think the past tells us that, for example, the fairness issue, how this community was controlled by the Big Five. How important it is that we don't fall back into that kind of thing. Control by the Big Five. But the law school students to graduate, they can take over control in the wrong kind of way too. They can take control for themselves. When they become very successful, they can forget that they have a responsibility to make the whole community better. I think that our responsibility does not cease when we become successful into the future. We've got to be sure that we share that and we use that to make the future better for those who are not as fortunate, but those who may be coming up down the path.

MK: When we first started the interview series, you told us about the time you were approached by John Burns through Tom Ebesu to run for office. At that time you were a reluctant candidate. You were very reluctant but you went to beach and you had long, long talk.

GA: Ala Moana Park.

MK: Tom Ebesu, long talk. You said that you folks talked about your childhoods and maybe the kind of place you wanted Hawai'i to be for your own children. You folks are still young yet. You didn't have children yet. I'm wondering, think about the things that you and Tom Ebesu talked about, think about all that you've done as governor, what the state has gone through, have those things been accomplished? Is it what you were hoping to achieve?

GA: I think several very basic things that I felt at that time. Number one was when we went to Ala Moana Park and we sat down there, we talked about our life as children growing up. I grew up in Kalihi-Pālāma area. And that's where Tom Ebesu grew up in Pālāma, too. We talked about the kind of life that we led, going to school, our classmates, how we played and got along with everybody, and even fought with our peers. Then we talked about how life was very different from people on the plantation, where they were mostly controlled by the plantation. They had *lunas* who really supervised their activities. We talked about how different those experiences were. Then we talked about us growing up and now looking at our economy, looking at the opportunities, how, in the case of a law practice, we had a few large law firms that really controlled the practice. They had all the contact of the Big Five, big businesses. As a result, they had contact with the economic activity that took place. The other lawyers like us, we were trying to do whatever we can

to help get the rest of the law business. We talked about economic control that existed and how unfair it was that it was not based upon ability. We talked about, "Gee, Tom. You know, we don't care if we lose to somebody, but we want to be sure if we lose to somebody that person is better than us. Not because he or she has control or contact, part of another group of people who have influence here in our community." So that's the kind of thing that we talked about. The fairness issue was the problem that came out above everything else. We've got to live in a community that's fair, that provides opportunity to every person on an equal basis. The talented individual decides whether or not that person is going to succeed. That fairness becomes very important. I think that issue has become very important and we were able to talk about, what are you doing to be fair? You're not talking about taking care of friends; you got to worry about taking care of those who may not be your friends. That's the true test of fairness.

I think, too, in many ways, that has happened. But the community now is changing. It's not the same people who have the same kind of ideas. We have new people coming in, large companies coming in. Before it was the Big Five, but I think the concern has to be large-chain operators have come in now. Are they going to become understanding of Hawai'i and the need for them to reach out?

When I was governor, whenever a new business started to come in, they came to see me. I always told them, "We welcome you but please understand that you are dealing with Hawai'i's people. Please understand that the economy must be of benefit to them too. What I'm saying is that, when a job is available, I don't mind somebody bringing from your office, head office, coming down here to take care of the policies that you have out there. That can teach our people, too. But remember that some of the leadership roles in your organization, leading people in our community, very important that you take care of our people. To the extent possible, you hire local people. Because when you do that, you are going to be increasing your business opportunities." I talked to every business and I tried to get them to understand if they are coming to Hawai'i, they've got to understand our people. They've got to understand how we do business too. In order to do that, you've got to have our local people in leadership positions too. I tried to do that. I'm not sure that happens anymore. I think that that's what we've got to be very concerned about. Our people have to be very concerned, reassert their need for fair play in this community. Reassert our need and our desire to take care of all people, not just people in Hawai'i but those who are recent arrivals to Hawai'i.

TC: As I sat and listened to your back and forth with Michi, you talked about a time when there was this very strong focus on individual opportunity development, individual potential, community development, social development. Let's uplift; let's grow. If that's at the core of all of this, then what I hear you describing as that great theme, that great theme is in jeopardy. I wonder if I'm hearing that right. If so, what do we do?

GA: I was sitting in this room when a group of people who knew me, worked for me before, came to see me and wanted to talk to me about Hawai'i. They asked me if I would have some coffee hours. When I thought about coffee hours, I thought about campaigns. I said, "I'm not running for office. It's hard work."

They told me they know how effective I was at the coffee hours when I was campaigning. Maybe that same kind of thing needs to be done with people when I talk

about Hawai‘i’s future. So when they asked me about starting coffee hours, I thought about that. I told them, “I’m willing to do it under one condition. Each of you have some coffee hours too.” They told me they don’t know what to do. I said, “Of course you know what to do. All you’d have to do is call people, come over for coffee. Get three or four people to come over for coffee. Tell them, ‘Tonight when you come, can you talk a little bit about Hawai‘i’s future?’ In a small way, when you do that, you’re going to have people who will be thinking about Hawai‘i’s future.”

I did that, but I’ve gone to many organizations and I’ve given many speeches now. I’ve gone to the chamber; I’ve gone to the bar association meetings. I’ve told them about the importance of their participating. I tell them, “You folks are all good people. You’re very concerned about Hawai‘i, but you’ve forgotten one part. Business people, Chamber of Commerce, you will have your shop open, but when you close the door, you go home—you do everything you can to make the economy better—but you go home, now you go home, you’re a parent and you have children. You have all the problems that everyone else faces. What are you doing to make that part of your life matter?”

I tell lawyers the same thing. “When you start practicing law, you go home and you have children. What are you doing?” I told them, “You know my son? He’s very active coaching, helping my grandson. Grandchildren participate in all kinds of things. My daughter-in-law is busy, involved in many things. That’s very good. But when they’re so busy and they finish doing that, they can feel that they’ve done everything they can as parents. But if that’s all they do, who’s going to take care of the community, the other needs in the community? Who’s going to talk about Hawai‘i’s future and the kind of things that need to be done in our community?” That’s the group that I’ve challenged. Good people. Good parents, very busy in doing things for the children. Yet, when they’re finished, they feel that that’s what they’ve done for the community. That’s not enough. That’s what I’m trying to get started.

I’m trying to get young people to understand. I tell them, “You know what? You folks are in high school. You’re smarter than I was when I was there.” They are. They’re extremely bright. They’re more knowledgeable, more worldly than I was when I was a student. I tell them, “That’s very good. I’m very happy to see that.” But I tell them, “Don’t stop if you graduate, you continue. After you become adults, you become family members, don’t forget the responsibilities. The kind of thing you’re talking about now, the future of Hawai‘i, about jobs, about the economy, about the environment, about energy, these are things that are important. You cannot give this up. That affects your future.” So every chance I get, I talk about the future.

You know, Donn [GA’s son] and a group was talking about my birthday next year. They were talking about doing that as a way to set up something so when I’m gone, there will be a continuation of some of my thoughts and policies that impact the future. Donn called me the other day and he said, “Dad, can you put off until next birthday?”

I told him, “Oh, that’s better because that’s my eighty-eighth birthday. That would force me to live longer, too.” (Laughs) The whole idea there, my hope is that we’ll get some monies for a foundation. But, I told Donn, “That’s not enough. When the foundation is put together like that, I want people to come together and talk about the future, what they have to do in order for them to pick up some things that I’ve said that’s important.” I said,

“The first year, I’m talking about the mission for the foundation. I’m prepared to participate also. We’ve got to develop some of these ideas so that many people sit down and talk about what they want the future to be and about how this foundation can be very helpful. That’s my hope and that’s what I feel. I’ll do this until they put me to rest.” After that, I want those who follow me to get some of the ideas, the feeling that I had, strong feelings that I have that you cannot just do things and live life today, you have an obligation to those who follow you. That’s an obligation to your own children, to your own grandchildren. That’s what I want to leave behind. (That’s stewardship.)

MK: That’s a powerful message to leave, yeah? As you spoke about your own son and daughter-in-law, they’re very busy with their lives, busy with their work, busy with their children, and they do their best to support their children’s activities, and you’ve said they’ve done a good job doing that, they’re busy doing all that, but you also want them to see their responsibilities and roles in the community. To me, I think, that goes back to something that you’ve been talking about all along, the idea to do things with mutuality, to know that you’re not alone but you’re part of a community, that you’re connected. Another point you’ve been making in all our interviews is that you’re not only thinking about the present but of the past and how it’s brought you to the present. You think about the present with an eye to the future. That goes with your *okage sama de*. If you could kind of wrap it all up (chuckles). You know, those ideas are principles that have guided you all these years.

GA: Yeah. I think I could wrap it up with my leaving the office and starting off with bringing back my law practice. One of the things I decided was that I did not want to become governor and let that be a way for me to get my economic life style better. So I talked about the kind of work—Bishop Estate trustee, for example—that I would not be seeking. But I also made a decision that when I left the governor’s office, I would not enrich myself by taking work that dealt with state government. I spoke and I write about politics. But not for the purpose of getting compensated for that. That’s what I held myself true to. I can say that I’ve not done anything that resulted in me going back with the connections that I had in government and getting profit. I had many opportunities. People came to me and told me they wanted me to work, but I turned them all down because I felt that that was not necessary. In my own way I could say I make a good living practicing law. I think what I’m saying is basically is that I think what is important is that when one serves, one should serve not with the idea that they’re going to get some monetary, some profit out of it. It cannot be for him or for her. It’s to be because they feel the benefit will go to the community. I think that becomes very important for people to come in like that.

If they come in like that, also, then they would come into it with the notion that they don’t have to stick around. They don’t have to continue to be involved in politics. If necessary, they’re not wanted, they can’t do whatever they want to do, they should get out. I think that makes it possible for a person to go in there and serve and do what they feel needs to be done and do it and not be concerned about perpetuating themselves in office. Once they do that, they’re going to be doing what they think—not necessarily what they think is best, but what will perpetuate, keep them in office. To me, that’s the wrong thing to do. We must get over that. I think also, that when one serves, one has to serve with the idea that you’re not only going to makes things better. It’s very easy to point out things to do as a politician. Now I did this and I made this thing better. But

that's not enough because what you did to make things better now may not be the right things, the appropriate things, when you think about what's really good for Hawai'i in the long haul. Every time something comes up and you have to make a decision, now about some project, something that has to be done, you have to ask the question: good for us now, but is it going to be good for us in the future, in the long haul? That I think is very, very important. So the future is very important.

There are people who are very afraid of—and they don't trust planning for the future. They think that you can't predict the future. You can't predict what's going to happen tomorrow, day after tomorrow. Therefore, it's hard to plan. But to me, that's the beauty of trying to look long term, look at what you want Hawai'i to be in the long term. To get there, it's not one straight path. To get there, there are many obstacles along the way. New things happen to come up. You've got to shift; you've got to adjust and make the adjustment in order to get there. But your eye is up there so no matter how you get doing the things now, you're going to be heading in that direction and you're going to get there. That long view out there is very important. Otherwise, you're going to be bogged down with the problems that you have to deal with now, and you forget about the long view and you're going to do things that will neglect what needs to be done in the long haul.

A lot of it has to do with our lands, our own state lands, what we do with lands that we acquire to fulfill our purpose. Windward Regional Plan, what we did out there. Wai'ahole and Sacred Falls, and He'eia. All those things are very important.

It's important for us to look at our land use laws. They were created for the purpose of controlling—not really controlling, but directing what kind of growth takes place and where it takes place, helping the large landowners to work out a time schedule for development to take place. Identify lands that need to be saved for open space and for agriculture. I think we've forgotten the initial reasons why the Land Use Commission was created. I think we need to look at agriculture. That's a big picture too. We're going to have all our things grown outside of Hawai'i. We don't have any agriculture grown here in Hawai'i. In the long haul when you look at the long view, you've got to look at all—we got to produce our things. Not only produce, but it's a double-edged sword. You produce things locally, but you also provide open space that is very important too.

Energy you've got to look long term too. You've got to look at the kind of energy to make it possible for us to cut off our reliance on fossil fuel and for us to be more renewable, alternative—[look at] clean alternative right here in Hawai'i so we're not dependent on outside sources for our energy. We don't have to spend a lot of money to buy that energy, bring it in. We create right here in Hawai'i. It's become very clean energy. No pollution. So those things to me are very important.

Then, education. You've got to look at education. How important it is for us to, not only provide the educational opportunities, but for us to inspire young people to get educated and to do things that will make it possible. Get educated so that we can be better people. Get educated so that we have tools so that we can develop for our work. At the same time, educated so that we see the big picture for our community that we live in. That's important. Then I think you go from lower education to higher education. I think we've got to begin to ask the question: What does the university exist for? I'm not sure the board of regents today have asked that question. What's the reason for the university

today? To me, it's not only training for vocation. It's to develop good, strong, sound people who have feelings for the community who are good people because they understand about being a good person. Those things are important.

Also very important, however, is the importance of the university to the community. You know we talk about all the brain power over there. What are we using that brain power to think about Hawai'i to think about the things that are important, to think about the long term and what needs to be done for Hawai'i to retain—to get the kind of Hawai'i that we prefer.

Then, the role of research: What's the role of research? To develop anybody who wants to come down here who can get money and do any kind of research? Shouldn't we look at what kind of research that they do so that it's meaningful to Hawai'i? The problem is that we have research that takes away so much from the general education at the university, all the other things that are important to the university. I think that's where sometimes the conflict comes in. You know, I think that we better begin to look at what kind of people, what kind of research, do we continue to have here in Hawai'i. How meaningful is that to us? What benefits will we have? Not only to us, now, but the whole Pacific Basin.

MK: I guess we'll stay with the theme of reflecting. Through all the interviews, we can't help but be touched by the influence that your parents had on you. I was just wondering, if your mother were still alive today, what would you say to your mother?

GA: My mother was alive during the time I was governor. I think my mother would say to me that she was very privileged to have had the opportunity to be with me. She stayed with me. She was living at Washington Place too. She had the opportunity to see the things we were doing when I was governor. I think she would feel that she was lucky to have the opportunity to have this, to be with me. By the same token, I felt the day I was being sworn in up there, I looked out and I saw my family and I saw my mother there. I had wished that my father was there because he was no longer there. But I felt at the same time that my father knew that I was going to become governor, that he would want me to do whatever I had to do to do it the best way possible. I say that because during that 1970 campaign, when I was being pulled from various forces, wanting me to do things their way, my father was there with me telling me, "Do it your way, whatever you think about. You do it your way." I know that my father was there and saying to me, "You have a responsibility now and you've got to do what you feel you have to do. That you will not bring shame. Be very honorable in everything you do."

Today, when I think back about all the things that happened, my parents, everybody would tell my parents, my mother, "Oh, you're so lucky. Number one, your son. . . ." Sharing all the experience that they had gone through. I know that they had the sense of being very happy, but they would join me in expressing gratitude to so many people who made it all happen. I could not have [been elected and served] without the help of so many people. I could not have served if the people who got me elected, coming back to me and telling me everything that I had to do, putting a lot of pressure on me. I was very lucky to have support, very lucky that the people who supported me left me alone and told me, "You do the best that you can." They just felt that that's what I was going to do, do the best that I possibly can. I'm extremely grateful for that. The amount of people who

came out and supported us, many people who were never involved politically who came out and supported us, gave us that kind of support.

I'm grateful to so many people after I became governor who worked so closely with us. That state plan, the functional plan, could not have happened except for the fact that so many people shared some of the feelings I had about the need for us to look to the future, how the small parts can make the future better. I'm grateful that we had that kind of support. To me, that kind of support is almost unprecedented. To have ordinary people come in and participate and work and try to make things better for us. So I'm grateful that not only those who initially supported me, but those who disagreed with me, that they would also come out and present ideas for us. Because what they did was make it possible for our ideas to be strengthened, to be modified, to be changed to the extent that we listened to some views that were very different. They helped us make things better. They helped us make our work more successful because now we could incorporate some of their thoughts and we included them. What that means to me is that our community, it's a very diverse community. People have different ways that they live. We have to acknowledge that every person in our community is important. We have to make our policies fit their life style and bring them in so they can all be together, be moved by the policies that they put into effect. Those people who disagreed with us, I'm grateful that they had the courtesy to come out and tell us that we needed to do things.

As I look back now, I'm grateful for the people who came to work for me. My cabinet: I really had a very, very wonderful group of people who came to work, who made sacrifices to come because they could have earned a lot more being outside of government. They came because they were motivated by the desire to be of service. That's what they did. In return for that, I told them that I was going to leave them alone to let them do the work in the very best way possible. The policies were mine; I would decide what the policies were for the state government. But in terms of what every department had to do within that policy, I trusted my cabinet members, my department heads, to look at our policy and do whatever they can to make it possible for their department to operate better. Because I did that, I got a response from the people. You know, when you tell somebody, "I hold you responsible. I'm going to give you the responsibility," you put a burden on somebody to do what they have to do. Generally, the response is going to be they're going to do their best, to give you their best, so that they can be successful in their own way.

WN: There were some people running for office who say that we're the first generation to leave the next generation in worse shape than what we had. What do you say to that? Do you agree with that statement?

GA: No, no, because I think things are improving constantly. We go through phases. This is a very difficult period. So if you only judge this period, you can say, "This period is very tough on the economy. Everything is down." But we're also affected by what's happening in England, euro. We're also beginning to understand how important Asia is. Europe began to pull us down; Asia has not begun to do that. I think that we are now beginning to understand that the whole world is not just across the Atlantic. I think that's a good thing. Going through a very difficult period now but I don't think that's the situation forever. I think the economy will get better. I think that young people will come over and pick it up and move it ahead. I just feel very strongly that what we need to do is

therefore urge those who are going to follow us, not tell them what to do, but put upon them the responsibility of stepping in and doing whatever has to be done to make the community, the nation, and the world better.

WN: So our children and grandchildren are in a better place than what you and we are.

GA: That's right. I think that we have more fairness. We don't have the Big Five controlling things. We have other things that we've got to be concerned about. That's not to say there will not be any problems. But I think they are positioned. They understand. I think our responsibility is to make people understand what we have been through, what some of our problems have been so that they will be able to understand, to help solve their problems in their own little way.

TC: When you talk in these global, big picture terms, what is Hawai'i's role in this global picture?

GA: I think our responsibility is twofold. One, across the United States, for people to understand the importance of this area. To let the people in Asia understand how important they are to us and to the rest of the world.

I have been approached—in fact I'm going to give a speech next week to a group. If they're really talking about bringing economic leaders together in Asia, to talk about ways in which they can help the economy. I think that's our responsibility. One of the responsibilities, is to try to bring Asian people together and talk about the economy and how important it is for (coughs) [America and the rest of the world]. At the same time, [the responsibility] for us is to make the American side understand the importance of this area. There's a bigger, better understanding of the importance of the Pacific Asian Basin in terms of the impact on the economy of the United States. That's our responsibility. We can do that through the East-West Center in terms of the politics. We try to bring people and culture, individuals together. The other role we have, economic side.

TC: That sort of speaks to the potential of Hawai'i. If you look at Hawai'i as an American state, of which you were governor, what is the potential of this to America?

GA: We have to understand that ourselves, people in Hawai'i. Sometimes we don't understand that. We don't understand how important we can be in forging some of these ideas. At the East-West Center I think we have demonstrated the role Hawai'i can play in bringing people together. So we can understand why one country, one region, takes a certain position on an issue, why they have to take a certain position. It's because of their culture. It's because of their history. It's because of the land that they live in, the economy of the country that they come from. So all these things bear on the decisions that they make. What we have done at the East-West Center is bring this kind of thinking together so people can understand each other better, understand the ramifications of cultural differences and how they affect the people.

I think that we've got to go beyond that. We've got to look at the economy: How can we do, and how can we make it possible for us to bring different economies together, and how we can maybe help to strengthen, to help to open up eyes? Then to do that in Asia, but also to do that in the United States to let them understand. We are a long ways from

where we were one time when it was everything across the Atlantic. Now, most of the Pacific, we just begin to start and I don't think that we are really there. We talk, but it's not government that's going to do it. It's going to take people who can make this happen. That's what I think Hawai'i's role is, to make people, help them, become whatever they have.

I get involved in India because I feel very strongly that [with] India coming in, two democratic nations, Japan and India [will be] working closely together. Japan is looking at India and they're getting closer as two nations. But that's not enough. I tell them, "You've got to have people in Japan and India coming together a little bit more closely. You've got to have visitors coming together more closely. That's the part that I'm beginning to be involved a little bit. In helping to do that, I think Hawai'i can play a very important role.

MK: You're a father, grandfather, great-grandfather. I'd like you to take this as an opportunity to give a message to them, to your grandchildren and great-grandchild. What's your message, if you had to say a few sentences?

GA: I would tell them the importance of education. I would tell them that education is not for them to train themselves for a job only. That's important. They have to become good people, good individuals, more broad-minded individuals by looking at the community and learning from what they need to do. So I want them to be good and happy and managing their resources, becoming able to live a good life economically. But I also want them to be citizens of this community and of this world, to understand that they have responsibilities, not just to their well-being, but responsibility to the person who in the community here, maybe is not as fortunate, and try to help to lift, make it possible for that person's life to become better also. That kind of responsibility exists.

I would tell them that the future changes. The things that they need to meet that future changes. With the changes coming about, they must never, ever, lose sight of the fact that, what happens in the future depends on what they do at the present time. They must begin to think about what kind of place do they want Hawai'i to be. That thinking is going to be very different from my thinking about Hawai'i because the generation is different, because things are very different. We have the new technology that affects that kind of thought also. But that's what I want my children to be. I want them to be happy. I want them to be able to become happy because they have a good livelihood, but I want them to be citizens of this community and the world, and try to be sure that they don't neglect what other people need to have done. I want them to look at the future and be sure that if they don't do that, they may get shortchanged. They may get a future that may come by chance and not a future that they really wanted to engineer for themselves. But I want them to be happy.

MK: When were the happiest moments in your life? You want your children to be happy. I'm thinking, when were you the happiest?

GA: I can't say the happiest moment of my life because I think my life has been a very happy one. I can look at all the things that have happened to me and I'm so grateful. I wanted to become a lawyer when I was in eighth grade. So when I became a lawyer, I felt that I really got what I wanted to be. But, you know, getting where you want to be is only a step

in the right direction. If I only practiced law, I think my life would have been very shallow.

That conversation that I had with Jack Burns when he got me involved in the community and my subsequent involvement, and looking at the things that I felt needed to be done, I think made my life more meaningful. Rather than just being a person having a meaningful economic life, I think I had them all—meaningful life, a citizen of Hawai‘i, and a citizen of the world.

WN: Did you consider becoming a lawyer—your license to do what you did, subsequently?

GA: I think it was very important. You see, every person is moved by his own self confidence. Confidence has to be what he or she believes he can do. That’s very important. If you don’t believe that you can do some things, it’s going to be hard for you to take the next step and get involved. For me, becoming a lawyer meant that I developed the tools necessary for me to practice law, but from there I began to feel I can do many other things besides practicing law. I think that’s very important to every person. That’s my way of having done that. Every other person must achieve in their own mind the ability to do what they feel they want to do. Once having done that, I think that they develop the skills or feelings necessary in order for them to achieve success in another field. It’s important to understand that skill to do other things comes from many different kind of ways. It all depends on the individual. One person might want to develop a certain kind of skill, another person another kind of skill, but it’s most important, however, whatever the skill may be, every person feels that’s what I’m capable of doing and doing it my own way. I can be more successful because I would understand how to do it if I were to do it in my own way.

WN: Seems like becoming a lawyer was a real turning point in your life.

GA: Yes.

WN: I was wondering, have you ever thought how your life would have turned out if you hadn’t become a lawyer?

GA: I think I might have found another way to maybe get involved. Tom Ebesu was there and he was a big factor in my getting involved in the political arena. Tom and I talked about Hawai‘i. No matter what I did, I think eventually we would have come to that point. We live in this community. What kind of community is it? What has it been? What will it be in the future? I think that’s what Tom Ebesu’s conversation, that long conversation I had with him. If I had not been a lawyer, I think that we would have had that conversation in a very different kind of way.

MK: I’d like to ask the flip side of the question I just asked. What are the saddest times in your life?

GA: I think when I lost my father. It was a very sad moment for me because I was so tied in with my father and my mother, and somewhat the Japanese cultural things. The things that they taught me. The fact they he was not going to be with me when he talked about how he knew I was going to become governor. When I knew that was my next step, and

when he was not there when I lost him, when he died, then further when I became governor when he was not present.

My mother it's different. My mother, she stayed with us so I was very happy that my mother could live as long as she did with us. When I got married, Jeanie understood that I was the eldest son and she understood the responsibility I had taking care of my parents. So, I tried to do that. When my father died, again it was part of losing the person who taught me a lot, losing a person for whom I had responsibility to take care of, losing a person who I wished would be alive when I became the next person, next step.

MK: A lot has been made about—a lot has been said about—your relationship with the governor, Governor Burns. Was that sort of like a father to son type of relationship?

GA: Yeah.

MK: Or was that not the case?

GA: I had a very good relationship with him. For me, when he died, it was a different kind of feeling from my father dying. For me, when he died, it was a person who did a lot to help me and help the cause of Hawai'i. But it was not the kind of personal loss that I felt with my father. I was sad to see him go, but very different from the loss of my father.

MK: Another key person in your life is Mrs. Ariyoshi. Throughout the interview, you have always made it a point to talk about her involvement and to credit Mrs. Ariyoshi for her efforts. If you could, reflect on Mrs. Ariyoshi.

GA: I gave a talk last week when I was honored by the Japan-America Society. They honored both Jeanie and me. I mentioned that I was very happy to accept the honor, only because it included Jeanie. I told them about having been asked in an interview about whether it's true that every man has a woman behind. I mentioned that I didn't think it was true in my case. It was not true because Jeanie was not only behind me, but she was in front of me and she was by my side also. She made it possible for many of the things that I did, for me to be able to concentrate on doing the things that I needed to be. She took care of things that had to be looked at that I could not handle. She was also very important because she was a person who one could meet for the first time and begin to feel that they've known this person for a long time. There was a certain warmth in her that made that possible. So much so that, for example, the longest serving prime minister (of Thailand), Prem Tinsulanonda, I met him one night at a dinner and Jeanie was the one who made that dinner possible. She was the one who set it up. I sat through the dinner and met the prime minister but when I went to Thailand, he insisted that whenever I got there I would make contact with him. He wanted to see me in Thailand. He told me when I met him there that friendship is not about how long or how often you see a person. Friendship is about how you feel towards that person. "That's what I feel about you. You're my friend. Mrs. Ariyoshi is my friend." I thought about that. It wasn't me. It was Jeanie who created that feeling because she was the one who set it all up. I had already spent the dinner with him, you know. I think that's the kind of thing that Jeanie did for me.

When we had President [Xiannian] Li of China coming to Hawai‘i, when he was asked what kind of dinner he wanted set up, his response was, “I want the same kind of dinner that was set up for Zhao Ziyang, who was a premier of China at that time. Jeanie had talked about that dinner to the president and he wanted the same kind. That was all Jeanie’s work.

In many ways Jeanie was very helpful. In our campaign she was so good. Jeanie could go out and meet people and make people feel very comfortable. She went out and had coffee hours. She went to coffee hours and met people in the neighbor islands. When I went, they would all come to me and they would not ask me about how I was feeling. They would say, “How’s Mrs. Ariyoshi? Is she here?” But I think that’s the kind of person Jeanie was and she fit the role of first lady in ways that it would be very difficult for me to explain. Very natural person.

She also wanted to be very careful about the history of Hawai‘i and respect the fact that we had a royal family here, a monarchy in Hawai‘i. She wanted to be sure that Washington Place, which was the final home of the last queen of Hawai‘i, that she respected it and restored it in a way that showed respect for the royal past of Hawai‘i.

MK: She has definitely done a lot.

GA: Yes. She did, she definitely did. I could not have done it without her.

MK: When it came to family life, what made your family life possible?

GA: Well, my parents—I was number one son. So I had that obligation. Jeanie understood that. So she stepped in. Except for her, it would have been very difficult to have that three-generational family life. She was very good in how she dealt with my parents. She was very good in how she dealt with my children. We were out a lot and somebody had to make sure that the kids were well taken care of. Not only taken care of, but mentally that they were okay, that we were going to be away and they were going to miss us but things are going to be okay. That’s the role that Jeanie played in making it possible for my children to feel we were going to be busy and going to be away but not let that become a problem for them. It took a certain skill to talk to the children to tell them night after night, we’re going to be tied up, we’re going to be having to do other things, to make them understand that and to make them feel, “It’s okay. Mom and Dad, you can go. Go, it’s okay.”

TC: I had a nice experience yesterday looking at your zillion photos with Mrs. Ariyoshi. I was reminded of something that you don’t talk about because it’s not in your nature to talk about. But, if you look at the photos, history, what you see is, as you became governor and she became first lady, this young couple. You were pretty young and she’s beautiful. There you are as governor and you projected an image of that that went out across the country and it went around. There’s an image of—I don’t know—vitality and excitement and a certain celebrity (chuckles). Jeanie was as often a centerpiece of that as yourself. You were the taller one. (GA chuckles.) What about this, that point of view? Excitement, celebrity—that stuff matters too, right? Here’s how other people see Hawai‘i, how other people see things.

GA: I think it was important, not so much for me or Jeanie, but for Hawai'i's people, for people to be proud of Hawai'i. Part of that is reflected through me to be proud of Hawai'i. So for me, that was important that we put our best foot forward so that people would understand, outside of Hawai'i, that we have a government here in Hawai'i that they can be proud of and they can rely on. That's important. For me it was not the personal thing so much as my desire to be sure that I don't make our Hawai'i embarrassed by what I did. I think Jeanie had the same kind of feeling, too. That's a Japanese feeling. *Haji*, don't bring shame on your family and friends. But it's also, don't bring shame on the people of Hawai'i who you represented.

TC: In the many relationships that are preserved in the photographs, it's like the progression of American presidents, many of the great figures of Asia, who goes to the top of your inner thinking, inner feeling, about the most significant relationships? There may be several.

GA: In the United States or in Asia?

TC: Well, let's go to United States, and then Asia.

GA: I think the thing that really struck me is the message of John Kennedy. The speech that he gave and talked about: Don't ask your country what it can do for you. Ask your country what you can do for your country. That's what stuck in my mind all during the time I heard that speech. During the period I was going through my own campaign and after I got elected, that's the feeling that I had.

That's why in many ways, I went to our people. I didn't tell them in the same language. I didn't tell them, "Ask what you can do for your country, or state." But because I felt that, I went to our people. I told them what we were doing. Whenever we had a problem I told them what the problem was. I told them how I wanted to solve it. But I wanted them to understand I couldn't do it myself and I needed help. It all stems from John Kennedy's talk about what the people can do for the country. I understood how much people can do for our state in order to help us. All my problems that I had—the budget, I called on them for help. I've not seen that kind of thing happen.

I think political people are ashamed to say that they've got to ask people to help. Somehow they feel it's a sign of weakness if they can't say, "I'm going to do it and I did it." I don't think that's important. I think what's important is what is achieved because you bring people, not by what you do. With the help of many people, you can achieve. That's what is important. Without that kind of help, you may not achieve the things that you want to achieve. So I feel that in terms of the idea of help, it goes back to John Kennedy's speech.

TC: What other figure would you think of, American figure, who somehow you feel a strong tie to or you're influenced by?

GA: Jack Burns. Unquestionably, Jack Burns was a great influence on me and what I became, but also, in terms of how to do what I felt had to be done. When they told me that he and I were different individuals, come from different communities, different educational backgrounds, therefore being very different, that we may have different ideas about how

to do the things in our community, and he wanted me to be sure to know that he understood what those differences are and how we may be very different and how he wanted me to do things in my own way, understanding things were very different. I think I learned that lesson from him also. Every person can do his or her best when he or she understands that things get done best when you try to solve it in your way and do it in your way.

TC: There's a kind of phenomenon wherein we have a John A. Burns School of Medicine, we have John A. Burns Freeway, so we attempt to preserve the memory of Governor Burns. Somehow Americans never grasped what Burns's impact was. I think you probably became much better known around the country than Burns. But they didn't get the Burns part of the story. I don't know if you can comment on that but it's strange I think. Like people don't know who he was.

GA: Maybe it's because it's not what he did that becomes very visible, but I respect him more for his internal thoughts, his feelings, about how to get along with people. His expectation, he wants people to be lifted and do things in their own kind of way. That is not an easy thing to transmit. I think it's easier for me to transmit that now, especially because of the way I did things when I was governor and the things that I'm doing even after I'm through being governor, the speeches that I give, and the talks, and the things that I write about.

TC: The continuity that I really sense, looking back, is the continuity of this spring that feeds the well that has to do with human development, social development. In that sense the two of you are sort of locked together in history. And that it is that which you're concerned about that's unraveling. And it's like a community. Do you see that as the deep commonality with Governor Burns?

GA: Yes. I think it's more what we do with each other, how we look at another person, how we respect another individual's way of doing things. Those things are very, I think, common with Burns and me.

When I talked about us in the future, the foundation and developing ideas and people feeling very strongly about things that I believe, and when I'm gone, I don't expect that to be there forever. That's not what I'm trying to do. But at least, for the next generation that I have contact with, I want them to feel very strongly about some things I feel very strongly about. Hopefully, they will transmit some of that feeling in their own way, in a different kind of setting maybe, because Hawai'i is going to become very different. The changes may be very different and need to be very different. So I'm not trying to lock a way of life that everybody has to be that. What I'm trying to do is tell people, "Be conscious of the responsibility you have to the generation that follows you so that they will have a better future. You are not the things that lock the future into what you feel is important now. You've got to be mindful of the future." If I can get that through to the people, and people that follow me to do the same thing, not so much what we do but the idea that you have to think about what's going to be important in the future. That's what I think is the most important part of what I'm trying to do. I can't say what is going to be. That's why when I give talks, I don't tell people how they're going to solve their problems in the future. I point out the need for them to be concerned about the future and point out some of the issues that are important now but not necessarily that the issues are

going to be important at some point in the future. So it's a process that I think may be important.

That's what I tell my children. It's not only your life, but you've got to think about your children's future. You're thinking about it by trying to help them individually. But what happens when you live in a community that's really empty? That part you've got to work towards also.

TC: You've been really interested in technology. You've been involved deeply in technology in many ways. Do you think that technology of, you know, the computer, the cell phone, the 24/7, you're just into yourself in a way, is that fragmenting people, is that fragmenting society, or is that just part of a process of evolution—I don't know how you feel?

GA: I think it's very necessary that changes take place. I can't handle all of the things that the technology that's improved. . . .But I think it's important that it goes on because it's going to help to make life easier and better. It may create problems but every time you have any changes there are problems that come with it also. I think the trick is and in the future as these things come about, people are going to have an idea about how best they can use it to make life easier and better for them. That's, I think, the important part about technology.

I think there are other kind of technologies. Tomorrow, Thursday, we're having a meeting of PISCES. I understand that we're going to be electing the president, chairman, president of the organization. What I have done in the space area is to look at what has happened and to indicate that in the space area, Hawai'i has an opportunity to beat everybody else. We can have a technology here, space technology, that no one can take away from us. It's important that Hawai'i not lose the edge that we have. Barking Sands for example, astronomy center here in Hawai'i, we have the space program with the university—far more advanced than many other universities.

(We have astronauts who trained on the Big Island. We have soil more similar to that which you find in outer space. NASA and private companies have taken our soil and have used it in certain space experiments. We are closer to the equator and in the center of a large ocean [Pacific Ocean]. We have the best telescopes on Mauna Kea. Especially important that NASA and the private sector between Hawai'i is important in aerospace activities.

We should understand that space research and activities presents one of the prominent economic activities of Hawai'i, America and the world. We must not lose this advantage we have over most, or not any other state in the U.S.)

So many private sector people are feeling that they want to be involved with Hawai'i. So I have taken it and I've gone to the legislature and I've met with many legislators who at one time didn't know anything about space. But now the legislature has become very, very space-oriented, more so than the governor. They're pushing it from the legislative angle. So they've asked whether or not I would accept the chairmanship. I told them, "Yes, only if it's temporary." I want to organize and get started in the right kind of way. Once we get started in the right kind of way, I want somebody else to step in. I want

somebody to step in because I'm not going to be around forever. I think it's important that while I'm still there, we have new leadership so we can be sure that we don't move in the wrong kind of direction. I can be there to help new leadership move ahead in the right kind of way. So I told them temporarily, so we can organize until we get moving, I'm going to accept.

TC: In my work yesterday with Mrs. Ariyoshi, I was reminded that we had not talked about the *Challenger* disaster. There's this plaque in Ellison Onizuka's effects in the ocean. I don't know if you know that. He had the picture of Governor Ariyoshi and Jean and the family. Could you talk about Ellison Onizuka in this context?

GA: Ellison was a country boy. When I think about taking a boy out of the country, but not the country out of him, [the saying] suits Ellison Onizuka. He became a very famous astronaut, but he came out of the country corner. He never forgot where his roots were. Every time he came back to Hawai'i, he would tell me, "Can we go to some schools and meet some young kids?" He went there to try to involve them in space but also to tell them, "Eh, Hawai'i, no matter where you come from you can succeed in everything. Not just in space." That's the message that he gave to the students. I was very touched by that.

Ellison used to tell me about how he succeeded, how he went to outer space, and how when he went there, it's not land, but ocean is such a big part of the universe and he used to tell me, "My concern is about the ocean, the importance of the ocean, and the benefit that. . . ." He felt it was magnified whenever he went to outer space and saw how big the ocean was.

Ellison told me at one point, he wanted to take his next visit, he wanted to take a picture of my family and take it up and when he returns he would autograph it and say that it was a picture that was taken out in space. Just happened that the *Challenger*, the disaster that took place, he could not return the picture to me like that, autographed. But about two months after the disaster, I got a call from—I think her name was Lorna, yeah? His wife's name. Lorna called me. She told me, "They wanted to take the photo up." They discovered two months later it was in Ellison Onizuka's box. Everything blew up but the box was intact. They located it. They found it and they opened it. There were two things in there. One was a prayer by a Buddhist priest. The other was a photograph of my family that he was going to return to us, autographed. She told me that they wanted to give it to me.

I told her, "Lorna, it's our picture but it must be kind of meaningful to you folks too. It went out in space and came back, one of only two things that remained."

She told me, "But we think it's more important to you and we want to return it to you." She didn't say anything more than that. But later on, we got from NASA a plaque with a picture that they took of the astronauts and *Challenger*. Everything was destroyed except that picture [of the Ariyoshi family] which was on the *Challenger*. So, when it was sent back to me I was very touched by the fact that it came back to us, but without Ellison's signature—but touched that it survived. What he wanted to do was get the picture back to us. In a very different way it came back to us.

I wish more people knew the kind of person he was. But every speech that I gave, I talked about this “country boy.” You couldn’t take the country out of him.

I felt very sad for Lorna also. The memorial services, place after place, NASA had set it up. It came back to Hawai‘i too. When they had the services out here, I told Lorna, “I really feel for you. It’s hard enough to have lost him, but it’s a constant reminder. Every time you go, every memorial service, you must rethink the loss that you have. I really feel sorry for you.” But at the same time, I told her I’m very grateful that she was strong enough and willing to do this so people could understand that every time I gave a speech, I talked about how he always wanted to go to school. His first request was, “Take me to school where I can meet young people where I can talk to them about opportunities in this community and how I never dreamt I could become an astronaut. What was possible when I became that. And how every youngster in Hawai‘i can afford to look out and become what they want to become, whatever it may be.” Very strong message he gave.

MK: That’s the same message that you give. (GA chuckles.)

WN: One way to see it is: You can take the boy out of the country but you can’t take the country out of the boy. Can you say the same thing about you and Hawai‘i? You can go somewhere else but you can never take the Hawai‘i out of George Ariyoshi?

GA: That’s right. Even now when I travel, I come back and I get in the elevator and I look out and I see the open port, waterfront, the harbor, and I think to myself how lucky I am that I’m a part of Hawai‘i.

TC: Shall we stop?

WN: Time to end.

TC: That is a perfect. . .

MK: Perfect ending.

WN: Thank you.

MK: Oh, thank you Governor.

(Applause)

MK: You should be giving more talks.

(Laughter)

WN: Only if he wants to, though. (GA chuckles) You can’t force him. (Laughs)

TC: As the instigator, I want to thank Michi and Warren and Governor for all you put into this and gave these sessions. I sat here and marveled because I’ve know you for a while now. But I sat here and marveled because I could sit back and you didn’t dodge. There was no question you dodged. And you engaged at every step. I marveled because I don’t know anybody who could do that. You didn’t edit our questions. (GA chuckles.)

MK: Yeah.

GA: I think it was easy for me because you helped recall some things that I didn't remember. But just as the same way that I go out and talk to people, I do it because I want to achieve something. I want to find in people the feeling that they also feel that it's important, Hawai'i becomes important in the future. The times that I've spent with you folks, I've enjoyed it because you've helped me bring some of that out. But also it makes me feel that maybe this might have some meaning for some people in the future, that some people might look at it and may be inspired that they too must get involved in ways that will make Hawai'i's future be very important. It's not easy for people to think about the future. It's easy for people to think about what they have to do now. But what I'm trying to do is tell people, "That's okay. That's part of what you have to do but don't forget what the other part of it is, what that means in terms of what's going to be in the future. You make the wrong decisions, the future is going to be affected. You make the right decision, the future is going to be better." So my participation is a way for me to hope that maybe by what we do here together, we may teach or encourage, or incite the people to become more meaningfully involved in the work that needs to be done for the future of Hawai'i.

So it's not only me. I think that what you folks do will make it encouraging and teach people about Hawai'i's future and how they need to think. It's not us telling them what the future is going to be, specifically identified, but it's a feeling that you've got to be involved. Every time you get involved don't think only about now, but think about what it means into the future. The future is theirs not ours. The people who look at some of the things that I've talked about they're going to be much younger. They're going to be the ones who are going to inherit that future and be the ones who pass on that future at some point after that.

END OF INTERVIEW

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: JEAN ARIYOSHI

Jean Ariyoshi, the sixth of seven children, was born in 1933, in Wahiawā, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i, a town associated with pineapple plantations and a large military presence.

Her parents, William and Shizue Hayashi, raised the family in Wahiawā where William operated a photo studio.

The photo business flourished during World War II as GIs from nearby Schofield Barracks lined up to have portraits taken and sent back home.

As the business flourished, the Hayashis moved from a home behind the studio to a larger one on Valley Avenue, still within Wahiawā.

As a youngster, she played with neighborhood friends, skated at a nearby rink, and enjoyed movies. Later, she was active in Y-Teen activities; she was selected delegate to a Mainland conference at Asilomar.

In 1951, she graduated from Leilehua High School.

Four years later, she graduated from the University of Hawai‘i, where she majored in secondary math education and minored in speech. In 1956, she earned her Fifth Year Certificate.

While still in college, she married George Ariyoshi, then a young attorney and legislator.

Beginning in 1954, she participated in twenty-five campaigns, as her husband moved from the legislative branch of government to the executive.

As First Lady (1974–1986), Jean Ariyoshi hosted visiting dignitaries as well as various members of the local community. She took on the restoration of Washington Place (the governor’s residence which was once home to Queen Lili‘uokalani), promoted volunteerism, and engaged in various community service and commemorative projects, many of which she still continues to support.

She and Governor Ariyoshi maintained a multi-generational household throughout their marriage. Even now, they enjoy the company of their children and their families in Honolulu.

Tape No. 59-14-1-13

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Jean Hayashi Ariyoshi (JA)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

February 20, 2013

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

MK: Okay, what I’ll do first is I’ll just tape an introduction and then we’ll start.

This is an interview with Jean Ariyoshi. This is session one on February 20, 2013 in Honolulu, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto, Tom Coffman, and myself, Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

Mrs. Ariyoshi, we thank you for saying yes to this and for being so patient with us. So, I’ll say thank you first. Like I said, we’ll do this in a life history approach. First of all, when were you born?

JA: Well, I was born during the depression years in 1933. I was born in Wahiawā, [O‘ahu] a town I grew up in which I loved. It was a little town. Everybody knew each other. There were four Hayashis in that town. One was a piano teacher, one was a clothier, one was an appliance dealer, and my father was the photographer. So it was a lovely town to grow up in. I had a lot of good friends. They were all different nationalities. My friends were Koreans and Chinese and Japanese and Filipinos. I went to Wahiawā Elementary School. I was born in a little house behind my father’s photography shop.

Actually [during the early years of their marriage], my parents lived in downtown [Honolulu], and he had a shop right on ‘A‘ala Park. He learned photography as a youngster. He was working in the cane fields when he came to Hawai‘i with his parents. In his teen years—they tell me the story—my sister used to tell me this story about how he was just lying down one day in the cane fields and he said, “This is not the life for me.” So he up and left the family. He went to the, I think to the Salvation Army and he was there for a while. He went to night school at ‘Iolani [School], and that’s how he learned his English. He got his English name—he was Shigeki Hayashi and he became William Shigeki Hayashi. Fortunately, he was tutored by [Yoshio Yamamoto] one of the best photographers from Japan. In those days, I would say turn of the century, the photographers—many of them—were from Japan. So, he was tutored by one of the best. When the man left Hawai‘i and went back to Japan, my father took over the shop at ‘A‘ala Park. He used to take a lot of pictures of the immigrants, because they would come from [the plantations on ‘Oahu]. In front of ‘A‘ala Park there was a train station that brought in the immigrants.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: I think that train station was the Dillingham O. R. & L. station.

JA: Yeah, yeah.

WN: That building is still there.

JA: Yeah.

MK: So when we turn the tape on again, you can continue with the work your father was doing at the shop near 'A'ala, yeah?

TC: Do you want me to put that phone next to you on the chair so you can answer it if you want?

MK: We could bring the phone closer to you.

JA: No, I don't have to answer it.

So what was my last sentence?

WN: 'A'ala Park, and you were talking about the train station.

MK: The kind of work that the photographers used to do back then with the immigrants.

JA: So, the immigrants used to come to my father's photography shop, and they used to take pictures for picture brides. In those days you could retouch all of the negatives by hand. That's what he used to do. He could take all your wrinkles out and make you look younger. He was doing very well in the business. Then of course, my sister tells me this story about how some of those picture brides probably came to Hawai'i expecting a much younger man from the pictures that they saw.

But anyway, he did photography in Downtown. They lived in Liliha Street—around that area. Of course the depression came and my mother at that time had children. She had one, two, and three—*toshi-go*—one year apart. He said he had to learn porcelain photography. So in those days that was the thing, but nobody knew how to do it in Hawai'i, so he up and left my mother. My mother had a very difficult time. She tells me at that time she really was thinking of divorce and everything, but my mother really suffered and she really persevered.

MK: How long was your father away at that time?

JA: He was away for a couple of years, because when he came back she became pregnant with the fourth, my brother Warren. Then as I mentioned, they were having a hard time in those depression years, so my mother joined—you know the *tanomoshi* group. That's when they pooled their monies together because they couldn't borrow monies from the bank. They would bid for the money, so she was able to move to Wahiawā because of *tanomoshi*. So, the whole family moved there and then I was born. I was number six. Then, the war [World War II] came.

MK: Before we get to that part—the war part—I figure we have to find out more about your mom. Tell us about your mom’s background.

JA: My mom [Shizue Togawa Hayashi] was very quiet—she could *ganbaru*. You know in Japanese, *ganbaru* means she could take it all in. She never, never grumbled. I never heard my mother complain about life or about anything. In that way I thought she was such a very strong person, she was very quiet, but very strong. So during the depression days, she would take in laundry to feed the family, because nobody wanted to take pictures in those days. That was the last thing you wanted to do. So, my sister tells me the stories about how they used to—for food—catch the pigeons on the roof of the photography shop. It was on the corner of California and Kamehameha Avenue. It was very difficult. They ate *chazuke*, which is tea and rice, practically every night. I know they really suffered a lot. That’s when I came along.

MK: Before your mother got married to your father, what was her life history up till then?

JA: My mother was actually born in [Honolulu] Hawai‘i, so she was a nisei. Her father [Umata Togawa] was one of the original eight who came to Hawai‘i as an educator. In fact, he helped the Japanese consulate a lot because the immigrants themselves, many of them couldn’t read or write. So, he came to teach them and he got involved with the Nichiren church. The Nichiren church originally was a little cottage, I’m told, on Liliha. There were about eight of them who went around the islands and started Nichiren temples around the island. So, he was the original eight. But shortly thereafter, he passed away, and so when he passed away my mother’s mother—my grandmother—couldn’t take care of the children because there were other siblings.

So, she sent them back to Japan to live with their auntie. I remember my mother telling me the story of how she was the second youngest. There was (Harue), the oldest. She was a teenager, and my mother was around nine or ten, because she went to the third grade to English [public] school at Royal School. That’s how she learned her English. She went to Japan after that. When they traveled to Japan, they stopped in (Kobe), and my younger auntie below my mother—Grace Nishikawa—she caught the measles or chicken pox, so she ended up in the hospital in Japan. They waited outside the hospital, those children. Then when she got well they moved on and went back to Okayama, because there’s where my mother was—her ancestors were from Okayama.

Then my grandmother meanwhile was in Hawai‘i, and she remarried. She married a businessman by the name of Mr. [Ensuke] Kagami. He was in the fishing industry. He had a home right in Waikīkī along Ala Wai, just where the Prince Hotel now sits. That was, of course, a marshland, and they had a home there. It was of course later filled up. He had a big home and it was next to a teahouse [Shioyu]. They tell me the story of how the owner of the teahouse used to ask my grandfather to hide the *‘ōkolehao*—that liquor—and he used to hide that liquor in his house. Anyway, they both went to Japan and picked up all the children and they came back to Hawai‘i.

Then my mother was a young teenager. She must have been about . . .

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: You were just saying that your mother was a young teenager, and. . .

JA: My mother was a young teenager then. Very pretty, so she went to work in a [Fukuroda] Hat Shop in downtown Honolulu. Because she was pretty, the owner would put her in front of the shop to attract the customers. Then I heard she had a few suitors, but she didn't know about it, because, of course, my grandma wanted her to keep on working, because that was income for her family. Then, when my father wanted her hand in marriage, she found out about it. So she married my father. That's how it was.

MK: Your mother's family was connected to the Nichiren mission. Your father had gone to the Salvation Army and become a Christian?

JA: Right, right.

MK: So when they got married, where did they end up having their ceremony?

JA: Well, of course when they got married she was dressed in a kimono. He was dressed in a suit. He looked very dapper. I really don't know what kind of service they had when they got married in those days. I think they just had a simple—taking their vows in the marriage ceremony.

MK: I'm curious, your mother was a *kibei* nisei. Right?

JA: Right.

MK: She was educated until the third grade here in Hawai'i. Your father was an issei, but came when he was about . . .

JA: A teenager.

MK: A young kid. Then learned English, yeah? As a teenager. So when you were growing up, what was the language spoken in the household by your parents?

JA: Well, when I grew up we spoke Japanese and English. But of course I was the sixth in the family, so by that time it was a lot of English. My father owned a photography shop, so his English became very good. So it was mostly Japanese and English mixed.

MK: You were saying that after they got married and they lived in town for a while, then eventually through a *tanomoshi* they settled in Wahiawā.

JA: Wahiawā, right.

MK: Where did you live in Wahiawā? The house that you remember.

JA: Right. The house that I lived in, in Wahiawā was on the corner of Kamehameha and California Avenue, on the *makai* Diamond Head side. It was a house behind my father's photography shop. A big two-story brown house. Because you know there were six of us at that time. I remember all the kids, we all slept upstairs. There was only one bathroom. I had a happy life, because my mother no matter how poor she was, I always remember having a doll. I had a doll to play with. When I look at my elementary school pictures, I

was one of the few students who had shoes and socks on my feet. I remember she sewed all of my dresses. I think I was really—although we were poor she really pampered me and really took good care of me.

Then when the war [World War II] came, I remember my oldest sister [Helen Hayashi], because she had to not go to the University of Hawai'i. My father was an alien and it was under his name, so they quickly switched the owner of the shop to my sister. So she couldn't go to the university. She worked in the shop. She had all these young ladies working in the shop. They were really busy because Schofield [Barracks] was right there. Wheeler Field was right there. And we were in the middle of the Pacific in this Pacific War. All the soldiers came to my father's shop. I remember seeing them standing in line to take their pictures, because they didn't know whether they would come home or not. Every weekend I remember stacks and stacks of pictures in big envelopes. We would send them to the Mainland.

MK: I was wondering, with your father being a photographer running his own business, what was your mom's involvement in the business, if any?

JA: No, my mom was a true housewife. She stayed home, took care of the kids, took care of us. She took part-time jobs if she could. The only thing she could do was laundry, ironing, cleaning house. I remember she used to clean Mrs. [G. R.] Greenwood's house. She was the head of the elementary school in Wahiawā—the principal there. That's the kind of things she did, but she was very supportive of my father. She really made it home for all of us, but she never worked outside in any big occupation.

MK: You mentioned your sister Helen during the war, kind of took over the shop yeah?

JA: Right, right.

MK: How about the other siblings? What were your folks' involvement in the photography shop?

JA: Well, my sister Marcia went off to college. My oldest brother Jimmy was in the 442nd [Regimental Combat Team]. He saw the war in Italy, in Europe. Out of all these regiments. . . .

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: We were just at the spot where you were talking about your brother who was in the 442 and had seen action in Europe.

JA: Yeah. And my brother Jimmy was about—I think there were only ten or twelve of them left in his entire [company]. He was one of the lucky few. Then my brother Warren joined the armed forces, but much later. He saw the Korean War. My brother Howard also saw the Korean War.

My oldest sister—because I was really young, I was in the third grade when the war started. My oldest sister was very kind to me because I remember her sending me to have

my hair permed. Then she sent me to the dressmaker. She did all of my clothes. Then she even sent me to the orthodontist in downtown Honolulu.

So, in the [19]40s I think I was one of the very few who ever had my teeth straightened in those days. I took a taxi at the corner of California and Kamehameha Avenue. For one dollar I would catch a taxi and it would take me to Alapa'i Street and drop me off there, and I would walk down to Dr. Shunzo Kagawa, my orthodontist. I really enjoyed going to downtown Honolulu, because although I was only about ten or eleven, I saw all the shops. There was [S. H.] Kress [and Company] there. There was Watumull's. All those old stores. I enjoyed seeing all of those things. It kind of opened my eyes to the world—that there was another world out there.

Anyway, it was a dirt road from Wahiawā to Downtown. It was a part of my life that I really enjoyed. It was during the war years, but we didn't know anything about the war. We were young kids—so innocent. I even did ice skating at that time. There was a big ice skating rink in Wahiawā, right where Marigold Market was. All the soldiers used to come and ice skate for \$1.25. Although movies were a quarter, ice skating I remember was \$1.25. We would skate and that's when I used to watch those Sonja Henie movies. I said I think I want to become an ice skater when I grow up. Anyway, that was one of my first dreams of what I wanted to be.

Those are really good years for me, and we moved into Valley Avenue. A bigger, much lovelier house from the brown house that I was born in. It was a good neighborhood. There were a lot of Filipinos around there. We used to play dodgeball and baseball on the streets because there were very few cars in those days. I used to bicycle and we used to hike down to Burma Road. At the end of Valley Avenue where I lived, there was a road that went all the way down into the gully. Somehow that was where the army had something down there concerning the army, the military. We used to pick plums and guavas and *wīwi*. Those are such good years for me as I think back.

MK: I think last time you mentioned to us that when your father had that really thriving business with the military, you folks used to help with the envelopes? What did you do?

JA: Yeah. Well, when my father had that photography shop, I was in the intermediate years. I learned how to color the photos. There was no Technicolor in those days. So what we did was we painted by hand all of those eight-by-ten pictures that we used to send away. It was all done in sepia tone. They were small paint tubes this size. We'd mix the paint and then color the flesh. Then mix the darker flesh and kind of like with the cotton, ease it in. So I used to do that and I used to really enjoy that. During all of my high school years I did all of the coloring for my father's photography shop for three dollars a week. I used to be in awe because he used to charge three dollars for each photograph that I had colored. There were many that I colored. Anyway, then during college I used to come back during weekends and do the coloring, and then my father retired from the photography shop.

MK: You mentioned that the business had prospered and you folks were able to move into the Valley Road house.

JA: Right.

MK: You were saying it was a lovelier house. What did it look like? That house on Valley Road.

JA: The house on [251] Valley Avenue was three bedrooms on the top, and three bedrooms downstairs. So it was a very big house. Very big house. My father bought a piano, so I took piano lessons. My father bought an automobile, so we had a car. Then my father bought a beach home. He bought a beach home in Kawaihoa. It was about from Hale'iwa, two miles. It was called Leslie Beach. He bought it for a simple fee. So during weekends, we used to drive out to the beach home. Those are really good years for me, because every weekend we would swim. The water was so pure and clear. My brother would go fishing, catch crabs, catch lobsters. We even caught a turtle, I remember. Anyway, we had sukiyaki every Saturday night. I used to listen to the "Hit Parade," and just swim. I used to bring my friends over to the beach home with me. That's how I just learned how to swim. It was really good years for me. Those are part of my good years of my life.

MK: You were mentioning that that home was located—were there many Filipino families too?

JA: Yeah. My Valley Avenue home was surrounded by Filipinos and Portuguese and Japanese and Koreans. Behind me was my best girlfriend, Helen Castro [formerly Andres], who of course later became my bridesmaid. The next street down on the corner was Margaret Kim. Those two were my best elementary school friends.

Then, in my intermediate years I went to—seventh grade I was at Leilehua School. Then my eighth and ninth grade my father sent me to a private school. It was called [Schofield] Post High School. It was the old Leilehua School from downtown Wahiawā, about one mile out toward Schofield. So, it was all military children. Everything was interesting because they used to say, "Oh, yes ma'am. Yes sir." It was a very different environment for me. There were many Caucasian kids. It was just a few of us going to that school, but it was a fun school. Then I went back to Leilehua during my sophomore year. During my sophomore year we had to walk to change classes, because they were building the new Leilehua High School. So we walked quite a lot to change classes. That was in the tenth, eleventh, and during my senior year the high school was finished so we moved back. We were the first graduating class to graduate from [the new] Leilehua High School.

MK: You mentioned that you went to Post School. If you could talk a little bit more about that experience? Because you were with like a different population.

JA: Right, right. Well, although we were a very mixed group, it's funny how my best girlfriend was still a Korean girl. There was another Caucasian girl, Margurite Harris, whom I really admired. She was a bright girl in my class. I got to be close to her, but not like I was close to June Kim. It was June whom I had sleepovers [with] at her home. We used to eat *kim chee* sandwiches and things like that. And Helen, Helen was my friend from elementary school who later of course became, as I mentioned, my bridesmaid. So she went to Post School too, so we continued that friendship at Post High School. But then she went to Punahou [School] and that's when I went back to Leilehua. I didn't feel it was any different except that we were more exposed to more Caucasians, because there were very, very few in my Leilehua School before that. Or even in my elementary school, so it was a good exposure I thought for me.

MK: Would you know why you were sent to this other school rather than just continuing with your other classmates?

JA: I don't know why my father sent me to the school, but I know Helen—my best friend—was going. I guess he wanted me to experience something different. For me it was okay, because Helen was going and June was going. They were all going, so it was fine with me.

MK: Had your older siblings been given that kind of opportunity too?

JA: No, no, because soon after Post High School closed down. You see. For my other siblings they never had that opportunity. It was always Wahiawā Elementary and Leilehua High School.

MK: I noticed that you mentioned that friend that you used to have *kim chee* sandwiches with—in your book there's a photo of the two of you graduating from a *hula* studio.

JA: Yeah. (Chuckles)

MK: Tell us about that, being sent to take *hula* lessons.

JA: Well, that's one good thing about Post High School. They offered the *hula* teacher, Mrs. Caminos, she was the wife of the police chief there. She has a *hālau* and she started to teach lessons there. In that way, I was very fortunate because I don't think I would ever have had that opportunity. I was exposed to that. June was going to take, so I said, "Oh, I'm going to take too." Helen was going to take. So we all took *hula* lessons. Now, my father was very old-fashioned. He was very Japanesey in that sense. My mother was more American because she was born here. But he was against that—me taking *hula* lessons. So, my mother helped me. She sent me to the *hula* classes without my father knowing. That was a great thing for me because I really enjoyed those *hula* classes. We graduated. We used to go to—nighttime early evening we used to dance at some of those restaurants. I enjoyed that.

MK: What restaurants did you folks dance at?

JA: As I remember, when you go out of Wahiawā you go down further out towards Downtown. There was a restaurant. I can't remember the name of that restaurant, but that's where we did *hula* dancing at nights, I remember, without my father knowing it. (MK and JA chuckle.)

TC: Was Kemoo Farm there then?

JA: Yeah. It could have been Kemoo Farm. Then Kemoo Farm later moved toward Schofield as I recall. I think it was called Kemoo Farms.

TC: Can I ask a few questions about, or do you want to get to the schools?

MK: No, go ahead.

TC: Okay. I'm curious what kind of feedback you were getting in school about your performance in school. What kind of grades were you making?

JA: Oh yeah.

TC: You can tell us, okay?

(Laughter)

JA: You mean I can brag? I hate to brag. (Laughs)

TC: I really wanted to know because I think you were getting straight As.

JA: Well, it wasn't straight As, but mostly As, and a few Bs. I worked hard when I was in school. I wanted to achieve. I wanted to make good grades. I wanted to make top grades. So we were homogenously grouped. I was always with kids with high grades. Then I took all of the math courses up to solid geometry and I took a chemistry—I took all those classes.

I think mostly I loved to be active, so I joined a lot of the organizations. The two organizations that I think mostly affected my high school life was 4-H, 4-H and the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association]. We were called Y-Teens in those days. That was my love of my after-school life. I didn't even go to Japanese[-language] school, because we had that opportunity, because I was more interested in my activities after school. With the Y-Teen group it gave me an opportunity to meet other girls from other schools.

We had conferences. I always went to the territorial conferences in those days. We were a territory. I met all these kids from other schools. I loved that. I guess I'm a people person. I really enjoyed meeting these kids. One year I was selected along with "Evie" [Evelyn] Teragawachi from McKinley [High School]. They chose one from the country and one from the city, to chair the Territorial Y-Teen Conference on this island. I was quite very active in the Y-Teens.

I remember when they said, "Why don't you try for being an Asilomar delegate?" That was a big thing. If you were selected as Asilomar delegate, you go to the Mainland [national YWCA Y-teen Conference]. So, I tried and I thought for sure I would never have a chance with the city girls. We country girls you know kind of felt inferior and intimidated, but I was able to discuss about things. We had group discussions and they interviewed me, and I was selected.

So, there were seven of us. It was the thrill of my life. I was so proud to have been selected, so we went on the DC-8 or something in those days. It took us eleven hours to fly from Honolulu to San Francisco. It was just before my senior year, that summer [1950]. We flew and went to Asilomar, which is in Pacific Grove, California. I met girls from all over America. It was a wonderful conference. We exchanged views. I remember when I went to Asilomar, the first thing I said, "Oh my, look at the ocean." And you know how I loved the ocean. I wore my bathing suit and I jumped in and (gasps) it was really cold. The California ocean was not the Hawaiian ocean I found out through the

hard way. Anyway, Asilomar was a great experience for me. Then we went on to Los Angeles and saw all the sights, and then came back. It was really a highlight of my high school life I think.

During high school, my senior advisor was Miss Myrtle Tobey. She went through sophomore, junior, senior years with us. So, Miss Tobey—she came to class one day and she said, “Well, children, we’re going to have a mock election.” In those days, nobody knew about mock elections. She was one of the first I think who had mock elections in school. So that was my first involvement with politics. I was not the candidate, I was the campaign manager. [Phyllis] “Boogie” Wong, my good girlfriend, was going to be Delegate Joseph Farrington, and I was the campaign manager. So, I worked hard on the campaign. I went around. I made cards for Boogie. I even had a slogan, “You can’t go wrong with Boogie Wong.”

(Laughter)

And so, I got all these votes for her. Anyway, she got elected. In my campaign speeches, I kind of got very involved with this delegate, Joseph Farrington. Although I never met him, I read about him. So, I had the gall to go to Miss Tobey and say, “Miss Tobey, you know what? I’d like to give a speech for Delegate Joseph Farrington at one of those rallies here in Wahiawā.” So, she was tickled pink. She arranged for me to speak at—would you believe it?—Republican rally. (Chuckles) In those days parties meant nothing to me, so I went on the stage in the park—in Wahiawā Park. I went up and I spoke. I gave my speech. The same speech that I gave for Boogie, I gave at that rally. So that was my first involvement with politics, and I enjoyed it.

TC: How did your speech go over? I’m curious.

JA: With the kids?

TC: In the park.

MK: At the rally.

JA: At the rally? There were some people that came up after me. I think they were kind of surprised to see a young kid speaking at a political rally, because in those days that never happened. Even maybe today it still doesn’t happen. I don’t know, but I think the people were kind of surprised that a youngster like me spoke at an adult rally. To this day I said, “Gee, I was kind of gutsy. I was a gutsy kid.” (Chuckles)

MK: What made you do that though?

JA: I don’t know. I think I was enthralled with Joseph Farrington. This whole idea. I was thrilled that Boogie got elected. So I said, “Why don’t I just take it a step higher?” I never thought I could do it, but then Miss Tobey got me on stage. (Miss Tobey encouraged me to do this.) She was able to make all of the arrangements. That’s how I got on stage.

MK: Up till then, what was your familiarity with electioneering?

JA: I had no background in politics, except my father. My father—he did support the Republicans, I remember some of the candidates coming to the shop, and I met these candidates. Shook hands with them. He used to donate to the campaigns to these Republican candidates. That was really the only experience with politics. Then I did this thing in high school, and that took me on to something higher.

WN: Do you remember who the politicians were? The Republican politicians?

JA: Yeah. Kageyama. I remember Kageyama distinctly.

TC: Richard.

JA: Yeah, Richard Kageyama. He was a kind of pudgy guy with a little mustache. Then I think it was Steere Noda. (Steere Noda was a Democrat.)

MK: Was it a usual practice for your father to introduce the kids to some of the clients?

JA: No, it so happened that I was at the studio. I was at the shop when some of them came in.

TC: Was there something about Joseph Farrington you liked? Was there some. . . .

JA: Well, I was impressed with what he did for Hawai‘i. It was a name very familiar to me because. . . .

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: We’re back on. You were just telling us why. . . .

JA: Yeah. Delegate Joseph Farrington, I really respected him for his background. He was a famous person as far as I was concerned. I just took it all in and I said, “Hey, maybe I can give my message and share it with people at the rally.” That’s how it all began, my first political experience.

TC: What year do you think that was?

JA: I was a senior in high school. Election was in the beginning of my senior year, so that was in 1950. (I was seventeen years old.)

MK: In those days, what did you think about Republicans or Democrats?

JA: In those days I never thought of Republicans or Democrats. I don’t think even my father thought of—I don’t know why he supported Republicans, but maybe it’s because there were a lot of Republicans in those days. But, for me it was nil. The party was nil. It was the man. That’s what impressed me at least, although I was a teenager.

MK: At that point when you made that speech at a rally, was that the first time you ever went before a large group of people?

JA: That was a big thing in my life, because it was the first time in my entire life I went in front of the public and gave a speech. Of course my next big speech was at graduation.

So those were the two big speeches in my high school life that was a very significant part of my life.

MK: You mentioned the speech at graduation. What role did you have in that graduation?

JA: There were just (three) speakers. The president of the class, (Charlotte Tashima), and me. So, I remember I really worked at it. I wrote the speech myself. It was a very, very cold evening because Leilehua School—as I said we’re the first graduating class—we had no auditorium. So, it was a lawn graduation. All the parents were on the benches and we’re on a stage. It was cold you know. Then I have to give this long speech. That was my remembrance of that evening. We had no gym or anything like that, so we were the first graduating class, but it was a long graduation.

MK: [Was it a valedictory speech?]

JA: (We were never told we were valedictorian or salutatorian. I never heard those two terms during my time.)

MK: What was the gist of your speech?

JA: Well, I began the speech with . . . let me think about that. (Pause) I talked about—mainly I did a survey of my class. What they were going to do, and what were their dreams, and what kind of occupations they wanted to go into. So I talked at great length about the dreams of our class. I talked about all the things that were going to give us new challenges in our new life. I still remember at the end of my speech I said, “Like the dawn that breaks a new day, we the graduating class of 1951, filled with the rays of initiative and enthusiasm, will face the tasks of a new day.” And something like it might be a rainy day and everything, but we will face that challenge. That was the ending of my speech as I remember.

MK: Your parents must have been really proud of you.

JA: Well, yeah. Unfortunately my father passed away when I was in college. He saw me get engaged to George on my birthday. But soon after—a month later—he died. So he never got to walk me down the aisle a few months later when we got married.

TC: Let me back up to a couple of things. When the war came, your father was in a potentially vulnerable position because. . . .

JA: He was an alien.

TC: He was first generation. And he was in a business that was essentially banned and there were literally prohibitions against Japanese.

JA: Yeah. That’s right.

TC: Was there a tension or fear around that for a while? Was there a tension or fear around that or was there any kind of event or FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] questioning or anything like that going on?

JA: Oh, we definitely had that. When the war started I was nine. My father of course was very scared in the sense that he was an alien and he owned a business. But we never had any people coming to the home to investigate or to question my father. I think he was one of the lucky ones. He had changed the ownership of the business quickly to my sister—my oldest sister. That could have been one of the reasons why, I don't know.

MK: I was wondering, before the war started, to what extent were your mother and father involved in Japanese activities?

JA: They were not involved at all. Not that I know of.

MK: Not involved in Japanese[-language] schools or temples or community events?

JA: No. No. My father just did photography and my mother was just a housewife that did work to support the family.

MK: How about things like *kenjinkai*?

JA: No.

MK: Or doing anything in writing, say with the consulate or anything like that?

JA: Not that I know of, no. They never had that connection.

MK: I was curious again, your father became a Christian. When war started, in your book it mentioned that you were on your way to church. So, growing up when it came to religion, what were you exposed to?

JA: There was a little (Christian) church on Westervelt Street. The pastor was Mr. Shimamura. Reverend Shimamura. It was the pastor's wife that used to take care of the kids. So I was walking to school on December 7th. . . .

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: You were walking to . . .

JA: I was walking to church.

TC: We need to change tape.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: You were just speaking about December 7th. You were walking to church on that morning?

JA: Yeah, on December 7th I was walking to church. Reverend Shimamura's church was on Westervelt Street. We had no idea what was going on, because when we got to school, all the kids were herded to the downstairs area. We had no idea what was going on. I was only nine. We were kept there all day. Then they let us go.

MK: During the war, I think there's a story about a relative being interned?

JA: Oh yeah. My father really was not questioned or anything. He was really lucky I think. He had no connections with any real Japanese organizations or anything like that. But my uncle Nishikawa was a Japanese radio announcer [and Japanese-language newspaperman]. He had a band. They used to play music. His name was [Dan] Toru Nishikawa. He was sent to concentration camp and he was in 'Ewa in Honouliuli. That's where he was. So my poor auntie [Grace Nishikawa] and my cousin Albert who was a couple of years older than me, they were living in Downtown but they had no means of support. So, my father took them in. So, they moved in with us in that big Valley Avenue house.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: The Nishikawas moved in. Your auntie and your cousin Albert. They moved in with your family?

JA: To the big Valley Avenue house. So my father gave her a job, so she was one of the young women working in my father's photography shop. My father supported them throughout those years that he was imprisoned. Uncle Nishikawa used to send me—I was just a little girl and I remember he used to send me those plastic rings to wear. They would melt down the plastic from the toothbrushes and make little rings. So I got those as gifts from my uncle. He gave me a band—a grosgrain ribbon. What they used to do was collect the shells, because they were close to the ocean. They would just sort of grind them down and he used to sew them on this grosgrain ribbon, which was later—I used as a hat band. I still have those presents—the grosgrain ribbon present that he sent me.

MK: This was the Nishikawa family that at one time considered adopting you? Could you tell us that story?

JA: Oh yeah. I forgot that story. Yeah, this auntie, Nishikawa that moved in with us, you see she had only one son, Albert. When I was born, of course as I mentioned it was during the depression years. My father had a very hard time supporting five siblings. So when I was born, my auntie wanted to adopt me. It was very tempting for my parents, because I was just another mouth to feed. But, my father used to say, "Dogs you give away, but never children." So fortunately I was never adopted and I stayed within the family. I really wouldn't be here today if that happened.

MK: So during the depression it was really hard?

JA: Yeah. Those were difficult years, especially for my mother.

MK: Since we're kind of going backwards a little bit, I also recall that one time you told us about a math competition that there was in class. You remember that?

JA: Oh yeah (chuckles).

MK: Tell us about that, because you were really young yeah?

JA: Yeah, fifth grade. A few years ago in fact, my fifth-grade teacher was 105 or something, and they interviewed her. I was really impressed. Her name was Mrs. [Jessie] Young. She was Chinese. She was my fifth-grade math teacher. They interviewed her when she was over 100 years old. They asked her in the newspaper, "Do you remember some of your students?" There were always a few that sticks out in your head.

Mrs. Young said, "Yes," she remembered a few. She remembered Jean Hayashi. I was shocked when I read about it, because that was me. She said that she was very good in math. When I think back during her class, I know why she said that, because in her class she used to have competitions—math competitions. We all used to compete and we used to have to divide 1,678,373 into one trillion six hundred eighty ninety-nine thousand et cetera. We had to divide all of that on the blackboard. We had the competition. She said, "Jean was very good at it. She always won." (Laughs) That was something that I remembered about my fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Young. It's so funny she remembered that all of those years after.

MK: Was it kind of unusual for a girl to be excelling at math in those days?

JA: Yeah. Oh, I loved math. Math was always my favorite. It was my favorite subject in all of my school years. When I graduated, I decided I would like to be a math teacher. In those days, I don't remember girls having big dreams of being a doctor. I don't know what it was. Maybe we were country girls, but I never had those dreams. Everybody wanted to be a schoolteacher, and that was a big thing when I was in high school. That you go to the University of Hawai'i. You become a schoolteacher. You get married, and you have children. That seemed to be like a pattern that was in our dreams. At least it was in my dream. When I was accepted at the university, that was what I wanted to be. So I majored in math.

MK: Up to that point in your family, how many of the kids had gone off to college before you?

JA: The only sister was Marcia, and she became an elementary school teacher. She was the third oldest. My sister Helen would have graduated, but as I said she had to work at my father's photography shop. But Marcia graduated and she became an elementary school teacher. Next was me. Then my kid sister Amy of course, but she went on to school in Los Angeles and then got married there.

MK: Then when you were growing up, what were your parents' expectations of you? What did they expect?

JA: My mother was such a quiet person. She never—she hardly conversed. I don't remember having very, very long conversations until later in life when I asked her about some of her memories. She never really pushed anything on me. If I wanted to excel, which I did in school, it just came. I don't know where it came from but I just wanted to do that. And my father was so busy in his business. Then the war came and everybody was so busy. My father was—in a sense he was very Japanese but I was never reared learning all the customs and the traditions of the old Japanese, like my husband George. George had that education. That was part of his family life.

It wasn't until I got married to George that I learned all about *mochi* and all that thing about putting the [bamboo] leaves at the front door on New Year's Day, and that the first person that enters the house on New Year's Day is supposed to be a male and not a female. Those things. We had ancestral worship, so we have the *bustudan* in the home. I have the *butsudan* now in my home. I learned all of that from George's family really when I was a young bride and entered his home. My family was more American. We ate spaghetti and hamburgers and I never ate too much Japanese food. My father ate sashimi every night, which I didn't eat, but he ate that every night. Oh, we had sukiyaki, but the rest of the meals I remember eating was spaghetti, roast beef, that kind of American food. I really never learned anything of that Japanese culture until after I got married to George, and then I developed a love for the culture and learned what a beautiful culture it was.

TC: Let me ask a couple of questions. You know during the war, did you experience any of the anti-Japanese passions which were running firsthand? Was there any sense it was swept back at you?

JA: During the war, no. I didn't feel any anti-Japanese feeling. You know why? Because I was in elementary school, and all the kids around me were kids I grew up with. There was no prejudice. I didn't know prejudice. The children I think, we didn't grow up knowing prejudice. So, I looked at a friend and I never looked at her as Filipino or Portuguese or Korean or Chinese. They were just kids I grew up with. I don't think I learned prejudice until much later. In fact, I'm more non-prejudiced than anything else I think because of that.

TC: I want to jump back to one little strand and then we'll go on. I'm very interested in the Y Jean, as you know.

JA: The what?

TC: I'm very interested in the Y, the YMCA experience. When you went to Asilomar, you remember what the content of the discussion was? Are there a few students you met who stick out in your memory?

JA: Yeah, well at Asilomar we were all teenagers. So we talked about teen problems. We talked about—we shared all of our experiences as Y-teens. But, the group that I went with were all people I met for the first time. It was up there at Asilomar that I bonded with them. Because I was not alone—we were a group—I don't remember bonding really well with any one single or two individuals outside of my group. But I really bonded with the others from Hawai'i.

MK: That would be like Evelyn Teragawachi?

JA: Yeah, Evelyn Teragawachi from McKinley. Marilyn Mitsuo from Roosevelt [High School]. Gracie Tamashiro from 'Ewa. Then we had from Farrington [High School]—I can see her face but I can't remember her name. (Her name was Melba Fujimoto.) They're all from different high schools.

MK: These are YW teens? Not mixing with the YM?

JA: No. The Y-Teens in those days, it provided a great bonding among ourselves, and it was a great social part of our life, because we met with the YMCA boys. We used to go to Waipahu, Waialua. We met all those boys. That was a big part of our social life. In those days we used to have dances, and dances was the thing in our lives. Then in 4-H we learned about farming, we learned about animals. It was a different kind of a group. I learned how to write essays. I learned how to do presentations in the 4-H, and I took part in the competition. Marian Kim and I did something about how to decorate a room. So, I did that presentation. So that was a different kind of group. But with the Y, it was fun. It was really fun for me.

MK: When you say the Y, it's more connected with the YWCA rather than school?

JA: Yes, it was.

MK: So separate from school.

JA: Yeah. It was after school hours. That was good because it kept us busy and out of trouble. (Chuckles)

MK: Did your Y-Teen club have a name?

JA: No. I don't remember. No. Just the Y-Teens.

MK: Y-Teens. Where was it located back then?

JA: The YWCA was located where—right above the corner of where I was born. Kamehameha and California Avenue, going up toward *mauka*. It was a building that later became—there used to be a post office, I think it became the post office later.

MK: At what age did a girl back then become involved with YW or Y-Teen activities?

JA: That was during my sophomore year. It was all during my high school years. Tenth, eleventh, twelfth. Y-Teens was the thing we loved.

MK: You mentioned the socials. What were those socials? How was it set up?

JA: Well, we would invite boys from the other YMCA groups, and from all over rural O'ahu. We would have refreshments and everything, and we would have all those records, and have some games and then a dance after. That was what those socials used to be like in those days. It was always at evenings. The Y I think had a very influential part of my life, I think, because I went on to college and I joined the Y at University of Hawai'i. There I was active again in the Y.

MK: How did your parents view your involvement in the Y-Teen clubs and going to socials with YM clubs?

JA: Well, my parents were very—they let me do a lot of things. They weren't very restrictive. They weren't very strict in some of the other ways some of my friends tell me about how they couldn't do certain things. But I think I had a lot of freedom to do those things. In those days there wasn't any drugs or anything like that. Life was very innocent. It was

clean and it was very healthy. So, for a social life it was great and my parents never objected, because I never got into trouble. I did well in school, and I think they had faith in me that I wouldn't do anything bad.

MK: I was wondering too, you're like the third girl in the family?

JA: Yeah, I was the third girl. The sixth of the siblings.

MK: So, was it about the same for your older sisters too? Were they not as restricted?

JA: I think for the other siblings. . . . I think for my older sisters probably like all parents they were stricter. But I think as the kids come along—I was number six—they kind of loosen up a bit like all parents do. How the youngest gets away with everything, you know. Anyway, I think that's how it went naturally, like most parents.

MK: What was the role of your oldest sister, Helen? Like you were saying, she sent you out to get your hair permed. She made you go out to get your teeth straightened. What was her role? It seems like more than just a sister role.

JA: Yeah. You see, when Helen started—when she was in the business running the photography shop, I was only nine, ten. I was the youngest in the family, and so there was much love and outpouring of love to me. In that way I think I was lucky. I was the youngest for ten years. So then, the family was making money. Everybody was making money in those days, and so my sister poured a lot of that love on me because she was single. She wasn't married yet. That's how I think she did those things like perming my hair and sent me to the dressmaker.

And she let me go skating. I did a lot of skating when I was in elementary school. I mentioned about ice skating, but every day from my fourth and fifth grades—I think I went into my sixth grade—every day after school I would skate. Roller skate that is. I did a lot of roller skating, and there were two roller skating rinks in Wahiawā in those days. [One of the rinks was Wahiawā Amusement Center, opened in 1938.]

She had my mother make those corduroy pants for me, so I used to wear pants to school. Few girls wore pants in those days, but I wore it because after school I was going roller skating, and when I fell down I wouldn't hurt myself. I wouldn't skin my knees as much. That's why I wore those corduroy pants to school.

So, she did all those things for me. Had my teeth straightened. I'm glad she had my teeth straightened. (Chuckles)

WN: You were the first to get your teeth straightened?

JA: Oh yes. I was the only one in the family. I think in Wahiawā I don't know of any other kid that had their teeth straightened—at least my friends.

WN: Were your teeth particularly crooked?

JA: They were very crooked.

WN: I mean compared to your siblings?

JA: Yeah. Let's see now. The other siblings had pretty good teeth. I remember my teeth were very crooked. So I appreciated what she did for me.

WN: I'm wondering, do you remember Conroy Bowl? On Schofield?

JA: No.

WN: Okay, just wondering.

MK: You know, growing up in Wahiawā during the war, you have that big military presence right?

JA: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: You have all these military guys coming into town.

JA: Yeah.

MK: Were there any worries for a girl to be amidst all that?

JA: No. Well, you know during the war years, we really welcomed the military. Especially in my father's business. My sister—my sisters in fact and the girls at the shop, I remember even having all those officers come to the home on Valley Avenue. They invited the military and they were all Caucasian—Caucasian men as I remember. You know, the home was open, and they could come and they visited. We had refreshments for them. I remember many times that my parents had opened my home to the military.

MK: And then when the military were invited into your home, who did all the planning and the hosting and everything?

JA: Well, it was my sister. My two sisters. Because I was too young in those days. I used to just watch. I remember one of the lieutenants—he fell in love with my oldest sister. Anyway, he was madly in love with her as I recall. I think that it became part of my family life when we opened the house to the military.

MK: Was your home also open to just regular community members for other things at any time?

JA: No. No. Marcia went to college. After the war, we had all the VVV [Varsity Victory Volunteer] boys—you know the Triple V boys? They were all from the 442nd [Regimental Combat Team] and the 100th Infantry [Battalion]. They used to come over to our beach home, I remember, in those days. My sisters used to have them over at the beach home in our house.

MK: So you grew up in an environment where people came over.

JA: Yeah.

MK: You folks hosted.

JA: Yeah. I was exposed to that.

TC: Is there anybody from the VVV you particularly remember? You were a little girl. They were ten years older than you, or eleven or twelve years older.

JA: No, I remember [Yoshimi] “Hash” [Hayashi], my cousin. He came over. There was a Kazuo Oyama, who was a lawyer. I think Ted Tsukiyama could have been one of them. I don’t remember their names, I was too young.

MK: You just mentioned your cousin, Hash. That’s. . .

JA: Yoshimi Hayashi.

MK: Yoshimi Hayashi, who became a judge.

JA: Yeah, [Hawai‘i] Supreme Court judge.

MK: How much contact did you folks have with the extended family like your cousins? Albert lived with you folks for a while.

JA: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

MK: Then you have this other cousin.

JA: Right.

MK: I was wondering, what was it like with the larger family members?

JA: We had a big extended family. In Wahiawā behind my house was my auntie Catherine, my father’s younger sister. She had a son, Ted, Teddy. I played with Teddy. Then he had another sister named Margaret. My auntie Margaret. She was the one who permed my hair. She had a beauty shop on Kamehameha Highway. Her daughter was June, and I grew up with June. She was a few years younger than me. And of course, my auntie Grace who came over to live with me with cousin Albert.

And we had an uncle, Yoshimi Hayashi’s father. Yoshimi Hayashi—Hash—of course later became a supreme court judge, but he went to—he was in law school on the Mainland with my sister Marcia when she was teaching there. Hash’s father had a—in Mānoa, way in Mānoa—he had a farm, a flower farm. I remember, during the war we had a car so we would drive out to Mānoa and visit that uncle.

Then of course my mother’s side, they were all in Japan. They were in Japan. Except for my auntie Grace, who was here.

MK: Did you know your paternal grandparents? Your father’s mom and dad.

JA: (I knew my paternal grandfather “*Jiji-chan*” and “*Bābā-chan*,” my paternal grandmother, but not my mother’s parents.)

My maternal grandfather died around 1913 or 1914. My grandmother I think before I was born she went back to Japan and died in Japan.

MK: I was wondering, when you were growing up, who were your role models?

JA: Well, you know, when I used to ice skate I loved Sonja Henie. I used to see her in the movies. I loved going to the movies. I still remember seeing Ronald Reagan in *King's Row* when I was in the third grade. I remember that picture very vividly to this day because he had his legs cut off. I remember, because the doctor was a sadist. Ronald Reagan was in an accident, and he was sort of like friendly with the doctor's daughter. So when he was in the accident, the doctor had intentionally cut off his legs.

But anyway, I remember the movies. Movies were a great part of my life. I loved going to the movies. Of course, there were movie stars I fell in love with. I love Elizabeth Taylor, 'cause she was close to my age—a little older. She was like a big star in my life. Sonja Henie only because she used to ice skate. And that's. . . .

TC: Back in the beginning of our interview, as you described your mother, I heard ways in which you could have been describing yourself. Was she in a very interior way, a role model for you?

JA: Yeah. My mother—even though she was very quiet, she was in a way a role model to me, because I felt for her. I just can't believe that anyone would never complain. Even as she grew old, she never complained to me. I don't remember one time in my life as she was going through even bad times. She was having a hard time with my father and everything, she never complained. I think that this inner strength, I think maybe I got that from her, because when I went through life I didn't want to complain. I didn't like confrontation.

Even after I got married. It was difficult living with in-laws, because George had an extended family. I had a big, big family I had to adjust to. I was just a young bride. I was able to go through all that. I would say one of the most difficult things in life is in-law relationships. But you know, George's parents gave so much love to their son and I could see that living with them. I knew when I married George that I had married a man in politics. He was the oldest son and I knew in those days the custom was that the oldest son took care of their parents. I accepted that from the very beginning, and I think that because I accepted that, in-law relationships went well. It was difficult, but it went well because I realized that they gave me a great husband, that I appreciated.

So I said even if I went through these hard times, I felt that if I can get through all of this that I would really become a bigger, better person. I think that's what helped me along the way.

TC: We just talked about the interior. The inside. You're also a very outgoing person.

JA: Mm-hmm [yes].

TC: You're an outgoing person without egotism, which is one of the things I like about you.

JA: (Laughs) Yeah, yeah.

TC: Where did you get that? This thing of being just freely outgoing. You don't force yourself.

JA: Yeah. I think as I mentioned, I was a people person. I loved people. I really enjoyed other people. That gave me much happiness in my life, because I had all these experiences, because I've had all of these activities. I took part in these activities, I met all these people, even after I married George, I was president of Lawyers' Wives of Hawai'i. I did all of those fashion shows. I continued—throughout my whole life, I continued being with people. When George become governor, or even when he was in politics running for [Territory of Hawai'i] House [of Representatives] and all those other offices, campaigning came very easy for me. It was hard work, but I loved it. I guess I got out of the house and I met people. It's something that came very naturally. I don't know where I got it from. I think it was just from my exposure to activities and being active in my school life, in my married life.

MK: As you talked about your childhood, there are certain themes that come up. You would always mention so-and-so was my closest friends back then. (JA chuckles.) Then so-and-so was my closest friend. Then so-and-so. You value your friendships. . . .

JA: Oh yes.

MK: Highly. Talk a bit about that. What friendships mean to you and what that allows you to do, or gives to you.

JA: I really loved all my friends. Friends were very important to me. I think in life if you can name in one hand people who you can call true friends, I think you're a lucky person. In having friends, you have to be a good friend yourself. It works both ways. My friends have been a very important part of my life all my life.

MK: Have these friends that you've known for many years all been involved in most of the activities of your life?

JA: You know, yeah. You know today, the girls I go on trips with—there are three others. They're all girls I grew up with in Wahiawā. We've been friends all my life. Two girls were my best friends—one in college, one throughout school life. That was a Filipina girl called Helen Andres—who became Castro. And then Edna Serikawa, who became Kano. To this day, Helen is one that we still travel together around the world. Edna is still my very good friend to this day. I see her every week, I talk to her on the telephone. Then, Joan Castroverde [later, Bickson] I met in college. We were in the *Ka Palapala* beauty pageant together. I remember Joan, such a lovely girl. I really enjoyed her as a friend. She got married, but we continued our friendship through marriage. I remember when we went for *Ka Palapala*, we would go in our heels. Heels was a big thing in those days. So we would kind of practice on our heels and we would go to the Andrews Amphitheater, because that's where the pageant was—the beauty pageant. And so, we would practice on our heels together. So Joan has been my lifelong friend, and to this day she's my best friend.

- MK: How important are peers in terms of your getting involved in activities?
- JA: What do you mean my peers?
- MK: Friends. Do they say, “Come on Jean, let’s go do this.”
- JA: Oh yeah.
- MK: Or, how much of that do you need to get involved? Or is it more like you telling Joan or Helen, “Come on you folks, let’s do this.”
- JA: Yeah, as peers we told each other let’s do this, let’s do that. I remember when George ran for his first election and I was a senior at the U. I got all my friends to campaign for him. You know, Jackie Young was one of them. Joan Bickson, Edna [Kano]. They all came out. We sent them to the different polls. We sent Joan because she looked part Hawaiian. We sent her to Kalihi, and things like that. We sent Edna to Mānoa. They have been part of my life throughout my whole life—my good friends.
- MK: In your high school years, when it came to academics we know that you really liked math. What did you think about the other subjects at school? How did you do?
- JA: I loved math. And what other subjects? Well, I loved history. I really loved history. So later in my life, whenever I traveled that was why I went to those places. I always read up the history and enjoyed the historical sites. I went into speech later in college. I thought I would be a counselor, because the counselor at Leilehua High School—I liked what he was doing counseling students. So, when I majored in math, I also started majoring in counseling. Then later in college Elizabeth Carr—Dr. Carr—talked me into doing more speech classes, and to take more speech classes, and then to eventually during my fifth year she had me teaching two classes at the University of Hawai‘i. It was phonetics—Speech 105 and Speech 100 for the freshman. While I was teaching those two classes, I was doing twelve credits at the university for me to get my fifth year. That was my year right after I got married to George, so those are very hard years for me.
- So then I minored in speech. Then graduated. Then I taught one year at Radford High School. I loved those kids because they were all navy kids. Everything was, “Yes ma’am. Yes sir.” You know, it reminded me of my old days back at [Schofield] Post High School, when those kids used to say, “Yes ma’am,” and “Yes sir.” The other kids never said things like that.
- MK: Going back to high school, you had your academics. I was wondering, were you active in student government when you were at Leilehua?
- JA: Yeah. I used to be—at Leilehua I used to be active in student council. I was active in Y-Teens. I was head of the Y-Teen council at Leilehua. Joined the math club. Tried any way as much as possible to be active. I used to help my father after school at the shop, so I was kept busy during high school.
- MK: So you had part-time jobs when you were in high school, yeah?

JA: Yeah. I did a lot of jobs, when I think about it. I did things on my own. My parents never told me to do this, do that. I think I had this thing in life where I wanted to try different things. So, my first job—I was in the tenth grade—I helped at post exchange. I did that during one summer.

Then, I not only worked at my father's photography shop, but my other friends were from Whitmore City. Those were my Japanese girlfriends. Edna Miyaguchi and Marian Yokoo. They used to talk about working in the fields. I said if they can do it, I can do it. Funny that challenging thing, so I said, "I'm going to work with you girls." So one summer, I worked in the pineapple fields. Let me tell you, in those days we did everything by hand, so my mother made my little *bentō* boxes. It was Vienna Sausage, SPAM, and *musubi*. All that kind of good stuff. I had to wear these denim jeans, my mother sewed me the denim aprons. I had to wear them, because you walk to the pineapple fields, they poked. The leaves poke you. Then I had those *tabis*, those cotton *tabis*. The little trucks—open trucks—would pick us up. I had to be there like 5:30 or something in the morning. Early in the morning I would walk to the corner, and these open trucks would pick us up at various places.

We got there at Whitmore City and I would meet Edna and Marian. Then we would go and there some girls from [Schofield] Post High School too—Barbara Morgan and others. So, we had a nice group. They would take us to where Mililani is now. That was all pineapple fields. The trucks would drop us off for each big plot, so you were working alone. They gave you a big canvas bag and you put this bag on your shoulder, and we had gloves, and we would pick the ripe pineapples by hand, because we didn't follow any machines. We picked by hand, we put them in the bag, and when the bag got full we'd go to the corner of the plot and dump these pineapples on the corner of the plot. So that's how they would count all of the pineapples that we had picked.

Also the best part—oh!—we looked forward to lunch. Lunch was on the dirt road. We would take off our aprons, spread our aprons, sit down, and eat our *bentōs*. That was really the best part of the day. I mean, food never tasted so good. I was so healthy that summer. I really was healthy. My body was the healthiest at that time. But anyway, we used to do things together like that.

TC: How old were you that summer Jean?

JA: I think I was sixteen, seventeen. Sixteen, seventeen—around that age.

TC: Between junior and senior year.

JA: Yeah. Right. Because the following year I worked at the cannery. I graduated. Moved to my sister's home just below University, and I worked at the cannery from her house. Libby's cannery [Libby, McNeill & Libby pineapple cannery].

I used to do other things too. I used to work in college. I had to work my way through college because my father had retired. So, I did work at the registrar's office at the University of Hawai'i. They were very kind to me. For sixty cents an hour. It was a job, it was income for me. They let me come in any time I was free during the school hours, so I would punch in and punch out. So I did a lot of work at the registrar's office.

Then, I did part-time on weekends at Liberty House. At that time it was Liberty House. Today it is Macy's. I worked in the women's department—women's apparel. In the men's department. I loved the men's department because I really sold a lot there. Then they moved me to the bridal salon, and they asked me when I was a junior in college whether I would head their bridal salon, because they were going to make it into a bigger department. But I said no. I had to graduate.

Then, during my junior year I was approached by Ken Okamoto of 442nd [Regimental Combat Team]. He was famous person there. He really played the *'ukulele* and was in the movie—the 442nd movie [*Go For Broke!*]. He asked me if I would co-star with him in his program ["Club International"] for KGMB TV. It was a live program and I think it was one of the first live programs in Hawai'i. It was half an hour, and we featured all of the talents—any talent that I could find. My role was to introduce all of the talents, interview them, and then they would do their talent. Ken and his crew would play. They were musicians and they played music in between. I did all the commercials live. That was my role, and I got fifty dollars for that half an hour. That was big bucks for me, you know.

MK: Did you have to go and find the talent for the program too?

JA: No. Most of the talents were found by the television station, or Ken, or myself. But most of them were found by the station.

TC: George has this story about you recruiting him to eat. (JA laughs.) Tell us, what is that story? From your point of view.

JA: When I did all the commercials live, I even had my girlfriends, Joan Bickson and all the girls, to come out and they would model. It was for Ethel's Dress Shop. Now, Ethel's Dress Shop in those days was really big in Downtown. I was able to wear all of her clothes. They would come out and they would model. It was a big thing to them.

Anyway, one commercial—oh my God—I was doing a *saimin* commercial. I said, "Oh my goodness. I need somebody to eat this *saimin* while I'm talking about this *saimin*. How good it is." George was—at that time George was courting me. I said, "Oh George, come! Come come come." So George came and I don't think he knew what he was getting into but it was just eat like this *saimin* was so delicious. So he eats the *saimin* and so they showed him eating the *saimin* too. He complains to this day. He said, "Yes, and I was never paid."

(Laughter)

MK: What kind of talents did you get?

JA: Well, we had *hula* talent, we had Indian dancing. I remember Indru Watumull and Gulab Watumull's daughter doing that. There were guest talents from high schools, from wherever.

MK: At that point, how many local women were there like hosting a program on TV?

JA: Yes, I think very few. I think we were one of the pioneers. Also, there was Barbara Kim. I think she was doing “Televi Digest.” I don’t know of any other at that time. That was live television here in Hawai‘i for the first time, because in those days television was new in the [19]50s right?

MK: When you say live TV, were there incidents where something went terribly wrong?

JA: No, not really. I never had that. I was lucky. I never had real big boo-boos. (MK chuckles.) Yeah, I was lucky.

MK: Should we end here and continue next time?

TC: I think this is a good end.

MK: Let’s end here because it’s almost twelve.

TC: We have you just about out of college here too.

JA: Yeah.

MK: Yeah. And meeting the governor then. George Ariyoshi.

JA: Yeah, yeah. Right. I should talk about next time about our engagement party.

MK: Yes.

JA: Because we had a *baishakunin*. You know what is a *baishakunin*? It’s a go-between.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-15-2-13

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Jean Hayashi Ariyoshi (JA)

Honolulu, O'ahu

March 6, 2013

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Jean Ariyoshi. This is session number two. It's March 6 in Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i. We've got Tom Coffman, Warren Nishimoto, and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. Okay, session number two.

We're at about the time when you were going to go off to college. Or, you had graduated from high school. I was wondering, what were your aspirations?

JA: Well, after graduation I always wanted to become a teacher, a math teacher. I really did want to go to a Mainland college. But, my father had just retired, and of course financially we couldn't afford it. So, I went to the University of Hawai'i. So, I loved the UH. It provided me with a lot of new friends, activities, and I loved the College of Education. My senior year was a very busy one for me.

I remember that year we were going to get engaged. It was George's first election. He was running for the old fifth representative district, which was about five-sixths of the area of O'ahu area-wise. It was about five-sixths. Nu'uuanu Avenue was the dividing line, so everything on the other side from Waipahu all the way to Waialua and to Kāne'ohe, Kailua. It was a very, very big district. I remember George was very busy going all over that part of the island. My family participated because we were going at that time. I even remember my grandmother—*Bābā-chan*—she was in her nineties and she was helping us with all the brochures because my father printed a lot of brochures for George, and we sent them to Waipahu, 'Ewa, Waialua, and Wahiawā.

So we had planned to get engaged on my birthday. My birthday was after the primary election, so I hadn't turned of-age yet, so I couldn't vote for George, but after I turned voting age—when we got engaged—I was able to vote for him because the election was early part of November and my birthday falls in October. I remember his parents coming to my home and they brought this great big fish—red fish. They brought an envelope and we had to have a *baishakunin*, which is a go-between. George had Mr. Motosue and I had Mr. Shintaku. They were friends of our parents. At that engagement party was when they came over and I had a birthday dinner also with a few of my friends.

So, it was a very, very busy year. He was campaigning. I got engaged. I was doing my practice teaching. Then we got married right after that a few months later. Unfortunately

my father died after our engagement party. So, he never really got to walk down the aisle with me. My oldest brother (gave me away). I remember George was twenty-eight at that time, and he was going to turn twenty-nine on March 12th. So his parents said that we had to get married before he was twenty-nine, because twenty-nine according to their old superstitions was that it was a bad year. So we kind of rushed things and during my semester break in February before he turned twenty-nine we got married. That was a really hectic time in my life.

I remember we went to Kaua'i—Coco Palms on Kaua'i—for our honeymoon. I remember at Coco Palms we were sunning on the beach, and nobody was on the beach in those days. We were the only ones. Then we have this guy walking from way down the beach walking towards us. He turned out to be a reporter. I told myself, "Welcome to the political world. I really am in it." But it was a great, great honeymoon. Grace Guslander was there. She greeted us and I remember how we used to put our beds together every night. Every time we go out and we came back our beds were separated. We had to do it again every night. So anyway, you would think the maid would catch the hint, but she didn't.

That was in February when we got married. Then we had a big party at the Chinese American Club. In those days, it was the place to have parties. Lau Yee Chai for dinners and big parties at this Chinese American Club. It was I think on Kapi'olani Boulevard, maybe where there's a big condominium there today.

WN: Marco Polo [a condominium] is there.

JA: Yeah. Marco Polo is there now. We had invited a thousand people. It was a big party. It was really big, because George has a lot of friends you know. I invited all my college friends, my sorority sisters. Then of course, we were thrown into this not only marriage but a political life. So, I knew from that time it wouldn't be easy, because father is usually away, going to be away. I accepted that. I accepted the knowledge that the oldest son in the Japanese way of life [takes care of his parents]. I wasn't in tune to that but I was told by my parents that the oldest son has to take care of his parents, so I knew from the very beginning that I would have to take care of his parents, and that I would have to live with them, which was not really easy, because all my other friends were all living on their own. In those days they all lived alone as newlyweds.

But I was thrown into this situation where I had a family. He had a teenaged kid sister, and I really grew up with her in all those years. He had a brother, just about two years older than me. It was a whole family I had to adjust myself to besides being a new bride. Then of course his sister, his younger sister, came all the way from Maui. [She] brought her whole family. So she lived with us nearly a year because she was building a home in Kailua. She had two kids and little kids, so we had three families living in that house. So, I remember those were very, very difficult years for me.

Then when I did my graduate work it was all at that time. I remember going down to—I was really skinny, I was like below 100 pounds. But then I did my graduate work which was carrying twelve credits, plus I taught two speech courses. Speech 100 for freshman students and Speech 105 in phonetics. I did that.

Then I got pregnant. When I got pregnant of course I had a terrible morning sickness for six months. All I did was, you know, emitting. I went down to 89 pounds, and that was the first time in my life I was down to 89 pounds. But I had a good birth and my daughter came along—Lynn. Then, after that my son Ryoza came along, two years later. They all came during the legislature. George was always away when I gave birth, so I said, I told George, “Let’s plan this thing, so that I’ll at least have a third when you’re around.” Anyway, when Donn was due—the third—he was due right in the middle of the session, in the 59th session.

So that was kind of funny, but all three have resolutions from the legislature. Lynn was due before the opening of the legislature in ’57, but there I was real big and pregnant and ready to give birth, and she came a few days later after the opening. So, we had a resolution from the legislature. Then Ryoza had a very interesting resolution. He was due in early May and they stopped the session on May—at the end of April I believe. So when they stopped the clock, everything that happened after had to be dated on April 30th or something. Ryoza was born on May 4th, so here I have this resolution congratulating us on the birth of our son who was really born on May 4th, but (the resolution) is dated April 30th. So that was kind of funny. That was unusual. All three kids were really—I call them political kids. They really were born during those sessions.

MK: Going back to your family, your large family living together, where was the home and how large was it to accommodate all of you?

JA: The home was on 29 Kawānanakoa Place. It was a two-story home. We had room, but we had to renovate the lower part so that his parents could move downstairs and his sister folks could live upstairs with us. I knew I had to live with and take care of his parents, it was something I had accepted from the very beginning. I think that was great for me because I just accepted it and I didn’t fight it. I tried not to fight it. I think with that acceptance I figured even if going through hard times, if I can live through this and really be successful in in-law relationships—because one of the most difficult things in marriages would be in-law relationships—I felt that if I can do that, I would really end up being a better person.

But I mainly did that because living with his parents I really appreciated what they did for him. For George. I used to see them campaigning. Going out early in the morning, making their lunch, and going early. Getting out there early, coming back late at night, passing his brochures. They were really giving, wonderful parents. I appreciated that. Because I knew they gave me such a wonderful son for a husband, that really helped me through those years in coping with whatever I had to cope with.

MK: You know, you had gone through college. You trained to be a teacher, but you got married to George Ariyoshi and the children came along. So, what happened in terms of your career aspirations?

JA: Well, I really wanted to go to a Mainland college as I had mentioned. During my fifth year I wanted to do graduate work there, but then I got married. So all of that went down the drain. Of course, that was a part of—I think I call it one of my crossroads in my life where I was lucky in fate and I ended up with marrying a wonderful man. So, our life changed of course after the children came. I stayed at home and I had no incentive—my

incentive to teach was gone. The family was first. I've always said that with us, family was bottom line.

So I stayed home like a good mother and a good wife, and I was busy rearing children and helping George in politics. I always did campaigning. He was running every two years at that time when the kids were young, and later became four years, but my role changed as the kids grew older. When the kids were young I did a lot of—I couldn't do passing of the brochures or go house to house and do campaigning like that. But, I was able to—we did cooking. I cooked all day because all of the campaign workers in those days used to come to our home. There would be like out pouring out into the yard because we had a big yard and a big home, so George's mother and I did a lot of cooking.

I remember the year that Donn was due in 1961, I was pregnant. I was all day standing on my feet because we used to do cooking and all those things. Then I had a bloody discharge, so the doctor said you go straight upstairs and you lie down and don't go down, so that was kind of frustrating for me. Things like that happened. But that was—cooking and that type of thing, distributing lunches to the workers.

From then it changed when he ran for lieutenant governor. The kids were older and so then I really did—meeting people and distributing brochures, having coffee hours. We did a lot of coffee hours.

TC: Can I interrupt? Okay. In our previous session Jean, I was really interested in the way that your childhood and teenage years evolved. Very social, your friends were all different ethnic groups. You're the skater.

JA: Yeah. I know. (Chuckles)

TC: And, there's not much that's Japanese in this story of your childhood. When you married George, then you become part of this household that was very Japanese. What was that like? Suddenly adapting to—there must have been umpteen Japanese practices and so on going on.

JA: Well, it was interesting living with his family and learning. I learned a lot. I chalked it up as a learning experience. So, I learned about all the old customs. Like we had a—what do you call those?

MK: Oh, *butsudan*? The Buddhist altar?

JA: *Butsudan*. The little altar. The *butsudan*, and how you would sort of pray to your ancestors. Also, New Year's was a big thing. We did *mochi*, we did hundred pounds of *mochi*. We had all our friends and family come over to the house. That was carried on in Washington Place by the way for twelve years while we were there.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: You are continuing to *mochi* at Washington Place.

JA: Yeah, yeah.

MK: It all had to do with Tom's question about. . . .

JA: Yeah. Adjusting. Yeah. Continue?

So, the other practices at New Year's were we had to put the little [bamboo and pine] branch outside the door and the first person in should be a male. So I learned all of that. I enjoyed it because I never experienced that in my home. I got to really study the Japanese culture and I really started to appreciate it. So later when I went into the tea ceremony, I really went into it very deeply because it really made me realize how beautiful the Japanese culture is.

WN: How knowledgeable was George on all of these things? Or was it more George's parents? Was George himself very knowledgeable of things like *butsudan* and *mochitsuki* and things like that?

JA: Oh yeah. George was all part of it. He was all part of it and he was quite Japanesey I thought from my point of view. When I was even dating him, you know. What do you do? You accept him for what he is and I realized it was a good thing. It's a wonderful thing that his parents had instilled in him.

WN: I have another question. Did you ever think that at age nineteen that you were really young to get married? I was just wondering, compared to like your friends and what other people were doing at age nineteen at that time.

JA: Yeah, you know, it was really strange because even for me when I think back, and I look at nineteen-year-olds today, I think "Wow, I was that age when I met George."

I remember my friends telling me, "Oh, he's too old for you." Because you know he already had a law practice and I was a sophomore in college. But, it never dawned on me that he was older. I think that maybe for my age maybe I was a little older than my real age, when I think about it. Socially and otherwise. When I met George I knew immediately. I fell in love with this guy, but I didn't know what was going to happen. He asked me for more dates and then things developed and then I knew that this was the guy I was going to marry. I really did.

MK: How did you know?

JA: I don't know how. I have no idea. It's just—you know because you date a lot of boys. You date a lot of men. And I never had a real steady. But somehow, in my judgment I guess I was able to see the good points in the individual. I saw many, many good points in George. When I compared him with all the other guys I was dating, I knew that this was the fellow.

MK: Going back to entering a very Japanese family. When you look back on your own family, how Japanese was your family?

JA: My father was—although he came from Japan during his teen years—he was quite American, in his ways. The only thing I could think about my father about being so Japanese was that he ate sashimi every night. And he loved sukiyaki, but aside from that

he was very American. He was in business. He dabbled in politics and supporting politicians in Wahiawā. He went into investment. He bought a lot of properties, so he was really I think very American.

My mother of course was born in Hawai‘i. She herself went to third grade in Royal School before she went to Japan. I’ve never even seen her in a kimono, but she adjusted very well coming back to Hawai‘i and to the American ways. Then the war started and everything was so American and so United States, you know. So nationalistic that I think I was a child of that. So, I never thought of the Japanese way of life until really I married George.

TC: You knew George at the point where he was using the change in the immigration law to legalize his father’s presence in this country. Were you aware that was going on?

JA: No, I didn’t know it was going on. I learned later, because it was something he did in his law office. George really didn’t discuss it with me. He never brought his work home and maybe that’s why he never did that. It was part of his legal work. Whenever he came home, he left everything—his work, everything—at the office. He spent all that time with family and the children. In that way I’m very appreciative that he was such a wonderful, wonderful father.

TC: How surprised were you when you found out that Ryozo Ariyoshi had jumped ship in Hawai‘i? That he had jumped ship in Hawai‘i and that he had his—his presence was illegal for a long time.

JA: Well, that was very, very shocking. Very shocking because here I was living in the family and not knowing that detail. So when George mentioned it, it was very shocking. I thought that it was a wonderful story.

TC: It is a wonderful story. It’s an amazing story. . . . The whole cultural story I think is interesting.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops then resumes.)

MK: You mentioned that your husband didn’t bring home his work from the law office. But in terms of his decision to enter the political arena—deciding to run—when he first decided to run in ’54, were you part of that decision making?

JA: No I wasn’t, because that was with his old friends Tom Ebesu and that group who helped in that first campaign. No, I wasn’t in on that. I learned about it later, because I was too busy. I was doing my practice teaching, I was getting ready for marriage, I got engaged. All of that was going on. George actually was too busy to tell me the little details because we were all very interested in just getting him elected. I guess we missed some of those stories and details.

MK: I know that Tom Ebesu became the best man in your wedding.

JA: Yeah. Right.

- MK: I was wondering, what do you remember about Tom Ebesu? Your husband has talked a lot about him.
- JA: You see, I never knew Tom that well, because after we got married I didn't have any relationships or close friendships with especially Tom. Soon after, he died very young. So there was no real long time for me to get to know Tom. And that's what happened.
- MK: We've heard the story about Jack Burns saying, "You run for office." Telling your husband to run for office. What have you been told about Jack Burns, or did you have any early acquaintance with Jack Burns?
- JA: I remember way back [in 1970] when George was running for lieutenant governor. I had a phone call. It was very, very scary. I mean to this day I can hear the man's voice. He said that he was going to kill George. So, it was really scary. I kind of panicked. When that happened I just wanted to take the kids and go to a hotel. This all happened when George was on the Big Island with Governor Burns, and they were campaigning. So I didn't know what to do, and then when I called George, Mrs. Burns called me. She said, "Jean, why don't you come to Washington Place and stay with us?"

So, I was very thankful, because there was a lot of security. We all stayed at Washington Place for three or four days. That was my first time I actually lived in the home for a few days and enjoyed the hospitality of the Burnses. I remember Grandpa Ariyoshi, when the first morning he woke up and he went downstairs into the family dining room to have his breakfast, he ordered *misoshiru*. You know, which is that bean curd soup. Well, I'm sure the maid was so surprised. That was probably the first time in (Washington Place) that somebody asked for *misoshiru*.

Which by the way, the Japanese foods was one of the big things I had gotten adjusted to in my living with the family and learning the Japanese ways. The food—the cooking of the Japanese food was something that was a major part of that life of getting adjusted to the Japanese way of life.

And Donn, after three or four days, Donn was sliding down the banister, the beautiful *koa* banister. And I panicked and I said, "I think it's time for us to go home." So that was my first experience living with the family—Governor and Mrs. Burns—staying there with them. But I know that George left early in the morning and had a lot of those breakfasts with Governor Burns. Sometimes he wouldn't come home for dinner. He'll call me and say he's staying over for dinner at Washington Place. So he had that very close relationship with the Burnses from the very beginning. And George really—whenever he talks about Governor Burns he really loved the governor. Like a father. I could see that similarity. That love for his father and the love for Governor Burns. He talked about Governor Burns with such passion to the kids and to myself. So I know that he was very appreciative of what happened in his life because of Governor Burns, definitely. One of his great crossroads in his life.

- TC: Which is why I can't talk with him as openly about him as I did with you. (JA laughs.)

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

TC: Yeah, he really reveres him. It is emotional, you can feel it.

MK: It was good to hear it from you.

JA: Yeah.

MK: The depth of that relationship.

JA: Yeah.

MK: Well, you know, talking about crossroads. I think one of the crossroads in his life was meeting you.

JA: (Chuckles) Or me meeting him.

MK: Both ways.

JA: Yeah. (Laughs) Yeah, that's right.

MK: And all the things that you folks did together. And I know earlier you mentioned . . .

TC: Can I ask a funny question about that?

MK: Go ahead.

TC: This is like, I'm not trying to embarrass you, but people look at you and your relationship with Governor Ariyoshi as first lady. "Wow, Jean did a lot for George. Jean was. . . ." (JA laughs) You know real world you've been an extraordinary first lady.

JA: Oh, thank you.

TC: Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. What's your notion of what you did for George? On just a personal level. What do you think your impact on George was?

JA: Well, George has got a very quiet personality. I'm kind of opposite. I'm kind of very open and I love to talk to people and I do that very freely. I'm very comfortable doing that. So even during the campaign, George was busy with his work. But I did the socializing part—meeting people. I think in that way I helped him. We were like the yin and yang in the campaign. That was what I enjoyed, and I think in some way it contributed. It was when I campaigned when he first ran for governor I went to every little nook in the neighboring islands. Small little towns. Coffee hours. Every day. Two, three coffee hours. Four or five people. Hundred people. That was my job and I loved it. I enjoyed it. And I never talked politics. I think that was my weakness and yet my strength, in the sense that all I talked about was the truth of what a wonderful husband he was and what a wonderful father he was. All those experiences, and that's all I talked about in the campaign besides meeting people and being very personal on a personal basis. Following through with little letters and things like that. Somebody had a—this couple that threw a coffee hour for me on Kaua'i, she just had a baby and so I sent her a little baby gift, and little things like that. Years later, I gave her a baby blanket, and she wrote to me from Kaua'i, and said, "I still have that blanket that you gave my daughter, and now my

daughter has a child, so now I'm giving that blanket to the child." I mean, things like that has happened throughout my life, and to me little things were important to people when you're on a people-to-people basis, and George had no time for that. So whenever I could I would kind of do things like that. In that way I could have helped him.

TC: I think you injected some fun and some joy in his life too, additionally. A sense of having more fun and a certain amount of joy.

JA: Amount of what?

TC: A certain amount of joy.

JA: Oh yeah.

TC: Enjoying living. What do you think of that?

JA: Yeah, I always loved being active, meeting people. I wanted to bring fun in George's life in a way I think, because I love fun and I'm that kind of a person. He's very serious. Then later on he kind of started joking and this and that. But he's really a very low-key, serious person. When they said in one of his campaigns he was quiet and effective, believe me, he was quiet and effective. So, I tried to develop friendships in our marriage, because he was too busy working for the people of the state. A lot of our friends—my friends—became his friends. Family friends, family-to-family. That brought a lot of joy in our lives.

TC: The other night at your totally delightful dinner [a dinner held by the Urasenke Foundation to honor Jean Ariyoshi]—I've had so many conversations with people who had such a great time at your dinner Jean.

JA: Oh yeah. It was a great dinner.

TC: You had some funny line about—you started out in youth, you were married to the fighting attorney from Kalihi. (JA laughs.) Tell us about that.

JA: Well, you know I used to go—on his first campaign he ran in '54 for the house of representatives—I used to go around. I went around Waialua and Wahiawā and Hale'iwa with my good girlfriend Marian Yokoo. I used to bring a ladder and tape. At that time they had posters, and posters and banners were the thing in those days. So I would carry these posters and I would tape it up and we would go to all these business establishments and tape on these posters. I used to always look, "Oh, the fighting attorney from Kalihi," you know? I thought it was a great slogan. First of all it made him very feisty and made him look like—and he was an attorney which was a very big asset. Then of course at the end of the last campaign or so, towards the end, funny how he turned out to be the quiet and effective governor.

(Laughter)

I can see where throughout those years—I mean thirty-two years in politics—I think he became very mellowed. He was feisty in those early days—he loved boxing. I know in his legal battles when he was an attorney he was really feisty in the sense that he was

great. He would win wonderful cases for his clients. But I think as the years progressed family came. He became very mellowed. He was always patient. To this day, all his life I've known him as a very patient man. Just recently for my grandson he built this canoe. By hand he buys this big piece of wood, and from that he would dig at it. He built a beautiful canoe. And forty hours of work, literally. He would come home from work early to be able to work on it, then late at night. I said, "Wow, this guy still has so much patience." I think that's a big virtue, so along his political life and all his life he developed this great capacity for patience, understanding.

He was always willing to listen to people. He always said, "I don't know everything. So I want to listen to all the points of views, and then I can come to a very good decision." You know that George was a good listener, but it's all part of this being very patient. I think that he became more open and very unafraid. I think it just developed along all those years in public life. At the end I think he did a lot of—after he left office—a lot of service to this community. His heart was still with Hawai'i. You know you read the newspaper and say, "Oh look at what's happening. This and this. And they should be doing this." I knew that his heart was still with Hawai'i, and he's always giving speeches to this day. How many years since he's left politics in '86? It's 27 years that he's been out of politics, but not really. He's still—the young legislators ask him for advice. He's got so much wisdom. I'm glad they do that. He's willing to share that wisdom, and he's still giving to the community. His heart is still for Hawai'i. I mean, that's where his heart is. It's family and Hawai'i for George.

TC: It is indeed.

MK: You know in your talk right now you mentioned coffee hours, and when we interviewed the governor he also spoke about those coffee hours. (JA laughs.) What were they? Nowadays we don't hear that much about coffee hours.

JA: You know with coffee hours it takes a lot of time and energy, whether it's a small group or a big group. I met a lot of small groups with women mainly. You'd be surprised how one can talk from mother to mother, wife to wife. A lot of our personal things come out, which George could never do in his political campaigns. I sort of was that other balance, where people got to know him like they knew him as a father and a husband. I think when it comes to people to people, you can make an impact, but it does take a lot out of you—a lot of time. So when he ran for governor—my whole thing was coffee hours.

Then of course after that, all from January till October, I did that. Then I was doing a coffee hour on Maui and the next day I was scheduled to be at Mo'ili'ili Community Center. A hundred women were waiting for me, and I went there and said, "I'm sorry people, but I think I have to go to the hospital." I really felt bad, and so Mona [Odachi] my secretary took me to emergency. It was the shingles. So I was so depressed, not mainly because of the shingles. I mean it was so painful. But, because I couldn't go out there campaigning for him. This was the last month before the general. Of course his big fight was in the primary, as you recall, when three of them were running [in 1974]. So I couldn't go out, but still I stayed home. I rested. I think I rested for about two weeks. Then Mona and I hit the road.

What we did was we went all through this island, because we thought this was the area we should campaign in. So Mona and I started early in the morning and came back at about by four or five o'clock. We would go to all these little niches—wherever there's a group of people. We just stop and talk to people and I just introduce myself and just pass out brochures and ask them for their help. What little time I had I would just get in a little about George. It wasn't easy. Once, I went into a bar and after I came out I said, "My God, what was I doing in that bar?" (MK chuckles.) To that extent. I also remember I was in Wai'anae and there was this group of people, and they were all construction workers, but I said, "Wow, look at those guys." So Mona and I just walked up to them and we started to introduce ourselves, pass the brochures, and I hear them while asking them for the help. Then I find out later that they were all Fasi people. But anyway, it's things like that, that makes life interesting in any campaign.

MK: With people running the campaign and serving as advisors, were you ever told you have to do it this way or don't do this, do that?

JA: When I started to—when I had to go to the neighbor islands it was Bob Oshiro who called me in. Bob was—I remember he always told me that in a campaign addition was the name of the game, not subtraction. He said you have to find somebody who is going to travel with you, a female companion, so get prepared for that. And get prepared to settle your things at home so somebody would help with the children, because you're going to be out there campaigning. So that's what I did. But Bob told me always. He gave me such good advice. You under dress, you don't put on any jewelry, you just—small talk, little things like that he was able to help me with. He was a great, great campaigner. A great advisor. A wonderful man—Bob Oshiro. We were so appreciative of Bob Oshiro and all what he did for us.

MK: At that time, how common was it for the spouses of political candidates to be involved?

JA: I think at that time, I don't think many wives did what I did. I don't know, it's something that came so naturally with me. I didn't mind doing it because I think most wives get sort of turned off when it comes to campaigning, because it's hard work. I wasn't turned off with it. I accepted it. I think that in all my life when you accept things from the very beginning, it gets easier. Then you get to enjoy it instead of having such negative emotions about things like that.

TC: That's very crucial, because in politics there's a tremendous amount of spousal resentment of the political process and the extent to which it takes the other spouse away. Your resolution of that and then your embrace of it at a level that is like completely comfortable with you. It's extraordinary. On the face it sounds so extraordinary, but in politics it's rife. You've heard hints of it over and over from different people.

JA: Yeah, I think because I always stressed being positive instead of negative. Even to my kids. When we had a lot of security when George was elected—just as an example of this—we hated security. Political wives and families do because you're in a fishbowl and then all of a sudden your privacy is taken away. But, I told the kids that you got to look at it at a very positive point of view. That they're there to protect Dad. They're there to protect all of the family, so we have to appreciate that. Just accept them and go with the flow. Since that time my kids really—we accepted security. We accepted the staff at

Washington Place. We always looked at them as family. I think that helped with the kids' idea of security.

I remember when Don Chapman—as you recall that story about who killed John Lennon yeah? When he was interviewed in prison, I think he said that he had a list and he was living here in Hawai'i. His wife was from Hawai'i, Japanese American. He flew to New York to kill John Lennon. But, when he was in prison when he was interviewed, that list that he had—the shortlist—was Elizabeth Taylor, et cetera. And he had George Ariyoshi on that list. But I remember reading about his comment that there's too many people around him, too many security. So I told kids, "Look, see what happened? So we need that. People need that security. So, it's a good thing. Accept it as it is."

TC: In 1965 or so, '64, George famously voted no on the Maryland land bill.

JA: Yeah. Right, right.

TC: Tell that story. From your point of view, that was very hard for you I would . . .

JA: Well, you see when the Maryland . . .

TC: He was very worried about you.

JA: Yeah. When the Maryland land bill came up, it was a really—I know that George was—it was a tough time for him in his life. He had all these pressures. They were going to strip him of his chairmanship and things like that. But, George always does what he thinks is right. That's one of his mainstays in his whole life. Whatever is right for the people of Hawai'i. The family—I had all these phone calls. It was such a controversial bill in those days, that I had all these phone calls. Usually the ones who are against him call against that his deciding to go be that thirteenth vote. I had a lot of bad phone calls. So George called in his friends, Yoshito Segawa and Jack Taniyama and they came to the home and they stayed with me and helped me with those phone calls.

I remember that I saw this on Kawānanakoa Place this great band of people—Hawaiian—coming to the home, led by Reverend Abraham Akaka. They came to embrace the family, which was something I'll always remember. It was such a spiritual thing, like you just know that George is doing the right thing because you feel it not only intellectually but spiritually. That was a very, very—one of my big moments in my life emotionally when they came to embrace us.

TC: I didn't know about that. So they came to your doorstep with a large number of people.

JA: Yes. And George was away. He wasn't home.

TC: Abraham Akaka was a pretty extraordinary person. In a way he became kind of pigeonholed in the prestige of his church and his style, but there was a lot of depth there too I think. One of the things was—I don't know if you know this—he became very close friends with Martin Luther King. In the Selma March . . .

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: Abraham Akaka, that's where we were.

TC: We finished Abraham Akaka I think.

JA: And we're on to. . . .

TC: Are we rolling? Okay. While we're on the subject of Abraham though—it was interesting. George actually played a big role in getting Senator [Daniel] Akaka going in politics too.

JA: Right, right.

TC: He must have gotten to know him somewhat.

JA: Senator Akaka?

TC: Yeah. What about Dan Akaka and this relationship with Abraham and Dan?

JA: I don't know much about that relationship.

TC: What's your relationship though, with Dan Akaka?

JA: Dan—I think my son had a greater relationship with Dan than I did. Donn. Because he really campaigned for the senator. But Dan was also always a very nice person. Wonderful, warm individual with so much *aloha*. He exudes that *aloha* spirit, which is very hard. There are very few individuals that can do that. I think with Senator Akaka he had that great ability. And it's contagious you know. I think the people on the Hill especially knew that and they appreciated that. That's why I think Dan was so much loved.

TC: One of the things that's really struck me in all this research I've done is how often the subject of the *aloha* spirit comes up, back in people's writings in the 1920s, 1930s, et cetera.

JA: (Chuckles) Uh huh [yes].

TC: People refer to it as you just referred to it, like we all know what it is. But what is it? (Chuckles)

JA: What is it? Well, so much has been said about the *aloha* spirit. If I had to put it in just one or a few words, I would say "love." It's love that exudes from the heart. It's a feeling. It's nothing that comes through the mouth. It comes spiritually through the heart. I mean, that's how I would explain the *aloha* spirit. You know as I said some people really have it. You can't manufacture it, because it's very innate. It comes from the inner soul, so that's why I say you can't manufacture it. It just has to be in you or you don't have it. A lot of people in Hawai'i have it because we're all just a part of this *aloha* land.

TC: Thanks, that's a tough . . .

JA: I know!

TC: Tough to talk about.

(Laughter)

JA: I know! Gee whiz. (Laughs)

TC: Like I say, it's that thing where it comes up in people's references all the time, but it's not defined.

JA: You know, I go back to Danny Akaka because—I go back because when I think about it, George loved Dan Akaka. I think that he opened that political world for Danny. He would have loved to have Dan as his lieutenant governor or something like that. Then I remember way back when they—well let me think about how this happened now. Oh, when John Waihee became governor—right after that you remember that there was an opening in the U.S. Senate. “George,” I know people had said, “why don't you be U.S. Senator?” I really feel that at that point, if George wanted it he could have easily gone to John. There was such a strong bonding between John and the governor—my husband. But you know, when I think back he didn't do that. He could have been a U.S. Senator when you think about it, he could still be a U.S. Senator today maybe if that was the case.

That's another crossroad I think in his life at that time of retirement. I really think that he felt he went above his own selfish self, the way I put it. He said no. I don't know whether he suggested Dan Akaka or whatever, but anyway, that gave Dan that opportunity. I think that's, when I think about it, that was a great decision in a sense because he had thirty-two years in politics. And he had, if you count all the elections, it's something like with primary, general and the constitutional convention and special election, I think it came up to something like twenty-five elections. But he won every election. He exited very gracefully I think. He exited as a winner. So I was proud of him that he had such a wonderful, graceful exit. Other opportunities opened for him, but he could have taken that I think, but he didn't. I give him a lot of credit for that.

Then of course later on he became—I think he kind of reinvented himself and he became very interested in business and got consultantships and started a few companies, so that has been his life after. Not only that, but he has given back to the community by giving a lot of speeches—he still does that. He shares his wisdom as much as he can. Then he of course is very active in many community projects and eleemosynary institutions.

TC: In his speeches in the last few years or X number of years, I see him having these terrific emotional connections with his audience. Have you noticed that?

JA: Yeah. Yeah.

TC: Beyond what he did when he was at the peak of his success. What's going on?

JA: I think that's part of being jaded, part of being very experienced. He has a very deep sense of the future for Hawai'i. He has that emotionally and spiritually—and it's just coming through. Actually, he had that in his speeches while he was governor, but somehow I think that he's really worried about the future of Hawai'i.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

TC: You know, I keep talking about this research that I'm doing Jean, and how gratifying it is.

MK: Are we all connected?

TC: Nineteen-thirty nine, Hung Wai Ching and his young wife went on a YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] excursion to a world peace conference in Amsterdam. YMCA. One of the several young people who went was Abraham Akaka.

JA: Oh.

TC: While they were there, Hitler launched the invasion of Poland.

JA: Oh, yeah.

TC: Akaka said that was the point at which he decided he was going to devote his life to the ministry.

JA: Oh, interesting.

TC: Isn't that an interesting story?

JA: Yeah.

TC: That's one of the things I think about now with Akaka. Anyway, I completely agree with you about—the last time I saw Senator Akaka he gave this talk about the *aloha* spirit.

JA: Oh yeah?

TC: It was like three minutes you know? And it was just beautiful. I wish we had that on video.

JA: Oh yeah, that would have been great if you had it on video.

TC: Okay, I want to backtrack. It's like 1966, you were getting this awful barrage of phone calls and George was very worried about you.

JA: That was the Maryland land bill [of the 1963 legislative session].

TC: Maryland land bill.

JA: That wasn't '66. It was (1963 legislative session). Oh yeah, I think it was ('63).

TC: George was very worried about you. And, at that point one could easily think George is so unpopular that this whole political thing that he's put so much of his time and his energy in is just about to go down the drain, right?

JA: Mm-hmm [yes].

TC: Because a lot of people wrote him off.

JA: Yeah, right.

TC: How did you feel about that? Just that this whole thing may be over. People don't appreciate it. People don't understand why he's doing this and. . . .

JA: Well, when George made that decision I knew that it was the right decision, because that's how he always votes. I never lost faith. I never thought that that would ruin him, I really didn't. I guess maybe I had too much faith or I don't know what it was, but not only that but because I thought at that time that was the right decision. I agreed with him. So I just knew that—I just think of that event as like one of those . . . you remember? What is that book? *Fortitude*. And there's John Kennedy's where they had . . .

TC: *Profiles in Courage*.

JA: Yeah, *Profiles in Courage*. Yeah. To me, that event was one of a profile in courage, when it comes to political courage. For a man to stand up when everything is against him, that he's going to vote according to what he thinks is right. I really chalk it up as one of those tales of political courage.

TC: When I first knew him it was like 1968 session I think. Nelson Doi had tried to entice him and Najo [Nadao Yoshinaga] tried to entice him and he basically told both of them no you've got to get together, but long story political story is so George ends up with virtually nothing.

JA: That's right.

TC: Ariyoshi's not a heavy player in this scene right?

JA: You know, when that thing happened, and everybody was threatening him, what his role was to try to get people together. That's always been part of George's philosophy. A more positive than negative. Get people together. When he tried to do that, and that's what happened, he ended up with nothing. He had some kind of utilities or some kind of a chairmanship. They even offered him the presidency of the senate, but you see it just shows you that he's just a steady guy all through in making these decisions. The man has no ego. That's one thing about George. I remember when Frank Fasi [longtime mayor of Honolulu and gubernatorial candidate] was barraging him with all the criticisms and George would never, never respond. I think that he. . . . I'm sorry I lost my train of thought.

TC: In reference to no ego.

JA: Yeah, yeah. So all of his workers or campaign people were saying, "George, you got to respond." You know, this and that. For George, it didn't matter. He really handled ego. I know he didn't have any ego, because he would give credit to the others. I remember Steere Noda at that time, he helped Steere, "Here Steere, you go introduce this bill and you take credit for it." I think that a lot of politicians want that credit. So with George, everybody has an ego but his was a very low number compared to other politicians.

- That's why I think he was able to accomplish so much. Because egos get in your way when it comes to political decisions. If you have a big ego, it's really going to be in your way. Even when he left politics, that was 1986, you know the last few years he could have given all those people all that monies they were asking for, but no, he was thinking of the future. He wanted something to leave. Something in the background for the rainy day and things like that. Because he didn't have a big ego he could do that.
- TC: In terms of our culture—our island culture, our political culture—is there something Japanese about that mastery of ego that was manifested in George?
- JA: Yeah.
- TC: In your opinion.
- JA: Because he didn't have a big ego really is—you're right, it's part of his growing up. Because of the influence of the Japanese culture that he was reared in. In that growing up his father always used to say appreciate everything. *Okagesama de*. That was our family motto now. You are what you are because of others. You never do things alone. He's always had that growing up philosophy in his mind, which is a very strong part of humility, being humble. I think that's George. He's humble. He appreciates. Because of this, he can get out of that ego syndrome. You know what I mean?
- TC: The vicious circle of egotism and people reacting to you and combativeness.
- JA: Right.
- TC: Yeah, it is a vicious circle. In this long succession like a couple of dozen elections he was enormously successful in terms of voter affirmation of him. Although, it was never like a big celebrity thing in the press. It all kind of went on in a relatively unstated way.
- JA: That's because he's an unstated person. He's that kind of person, you know. He never did things for publicity.
- TC: He doesn't have the self-advertisement that most politicians have.
- JA: No, no. But you see, because he didn't have this self-advertisement, he didn't have such a big ego, that shows he was a very secure man. George was always from the first time I met him, he was a very secure man. He had a firm hold on his values in life. I think because of that he was very secure, he could accomplish so much.
- TC: Why was he so secure? Insecurity is our middle name. Everybody's middle name. But why do you think he was so secure?
- JA: I think that in his security—mainly first he had wonderful parents. He had wonderful parents that gave him a lot of love. That to me could have been the basis of his security when he grew up. He always had the parents' support. They were always behind him. Even through all his campaigns. I think that gives any individual a sense of security. Love from his family, my kids, and everything, I think that was a big part of his life.
- TC: Probably because he snagged you Jean.

(Laughter)

He was governor for thirteen years, which is unprecedented. At the point he did a very graceful exit—I remember the newspaper stories in detail. Like, an administration that was unblemished. I remember that *Advertiser* article particularly. That's remarkable because there's so much money floating around.

JA: Yeah.

TC: Plus all the big accomplishment-type things. But the initial sense or sense for a long period was well, George was great but he was no Jack Burns. You know, Jack Burns was this god-like figure.

JA: Yeah, right.

TC: How did you feel about that? I have felt but I no longer feel it so much because I feel like the tide in this is changing, but for a long time I felt that he was underrated.

JA: Yeah.

TC: Underappreciated in terms of people grasping what he had accomplished as governor. Did you feel that?

JA: Yeah, you know, George is—I wouldn't call him a tightwad. He really watched the monies of the state. I shouldn't say tightwad.

(Laughter)

WN: Well, you said he wasn't one.

JA: Yeah. (Laughs) Well, anyway, George was not a tightwad. Now what am I saying? Let me start again.

TC: My basic question is did you feel he was underrated?

JA: Yeah. Yeah.

TC: Underappreciated.

JA: Yeah. At the time he left politics, you see, there was no one to compare George with. It was only Governor Burns. I remember Walter Dods [campaign advisor, community leader and bank executive] saying when he was interviewed when George left politics, he said that in ten years people will really appreciate George. I thought about that and I said—because he kept the monies and he watched the monies and he really had a wonderful budget. Lived within his budget. Didn't raise taxes. He was tight in letting go all these monies, [if he had let go of the monies,] he would get all this publicity or credit. He wasn't like that so he—as I go back it's because he really did not have a big ego. He didn't need that. So I think that when he left, people couldn't really appreciate what he did. Then you see later on when you can compare—I'm not saying that the other governors did not do well, they all did very well—but when you compare him later on I

- think maybe Walter Dods was right. That people would really appreciate him later, because at that time it was too fresh in their memory, when they couldn't get the park they wanted, they couldn't get the tennis court they wanted or whatever. So, I think that as years go by people will appreciate more what George did.
- WN: You said earlier that it was only John Burns before George as governor. Did you hear any comments about comparing George to John Burns? Anything like that?
- JA: No, I haven't heard comparisons. It was also not comparisons, always togetherness. Always Burns-Ariyoshi togetherness kind of comments. I never heard of comparisons between the two, because they were two different individuals. But I always heard about them doing things together, their love for each other, and what they together accomplished.
- TC: I think that's the main theme that's left from that is a sense of their years, that they shared, were some of the best years of Hawai'i's history. There was a little circle of people around Burns who couldn't swallow anybody being there except Burns I think, but that was very isolated. There was also this sense that Burns was this figure who was larger than life, somehow. I think that kind of mythology is the mythology that attaches to a founding figure. In that sense it's like a George Washington.
- JA: Yeah. Right, right.
- TC: George Washington is like this mythical figure almost. Lincoln is a mythical figure because he preserved the country.
- JA: Yeah, right.
- TC: So it's a situation where it's a popular mind.
- JA: It was a timing in how during his time the Democrats first got control, so he was like the great god for politics in Hawai'i.
- TC: What about Senator Inouye? Your relationship and George's relationship. What could you say about it? What could you tell people about?
- JA: Well, he always respected Dan. He liked Dan. They started in politics together. I remember when Dan was running for an office in the legislature and George was one of the—he and Stanley Hara I think—that voted for Dan, but nobody else did. He was very happy for Dan that he stepped up to the congressional level. That's where he belonged. Their friendship just continued until death—his death. Dan was more in Congress in Washington D.C. and George was here leading the state. They were on two different levels. I think they both as Japanese Americans really contributed to the history of Hawai'i.
- TC: The narrowly defined niches, the very specifically defined. He was the first Japanese American, Asian American, et cetera. When Governor Burns talked to him about, "You got to run for LG [Lieutenant Governor] so you can then have a crack at being governor. What matters is that somebody other than a white male—a white male has always sat

here in this chair [as an elected governor].” That is a special barrier, the executive power in a democratic system. What’s your perception on that Jean?

JA: Well, I remember when he was first selected to sit on the board for First Hawaiian Bank. He and Bob Wo. They were the two that broke the hundred-year barrier of Orientals sitting on an all-white board, for a hundred years or something. That was the beginning. That was the beginning of breaking barriers. So I think that when he became the first governor of Japanese American ancestry, that was all like it carried through another great, big barrier.

(Coughs) Sorry. Something in my throat.

MK: Shall we end now?

TC: Let’s do this question.

JA: Yeah.

TC: Tell me just a little bit more about what you think that barrier is though. The barrier of being chief executive as opposed to—you know we had tons of Asian American legislators. Tell me a little bit more about your perception of what you think the significance of becoming the chief executive of the state was as opposed to serving in the legislature, which had become commonplace.

JA: When George broke that barrier when he became governor, the first Japanese American governor in the history of America.

(Telephone rings.)

MK: What if we pick it up there?

JA: Okay, okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 59-16-3-13

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Jean Hayashi Ariyoshi (JA)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

March 22, 2013

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

MK: This is session number three with Jean Ariyoshi on March 22, 2013 in Nu‘uanu, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. It’s Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto, Warren Nishimoto, and Tom Coffman interviewing Mrs. Ariyoshi.

TC: Okay. Thank you. Now let’s pick up. We talked about your getting married to George first of all. You were the—you grew up skating—the all-American girl in a way. (JA laughs.) All your multiethnic friends in Wahiawā. And George is from this more culturally Japanese family. So you have to work this out, and you work it out. You commit yourself to this. And you start making babies and supporting George in his campaigns. Some of it was harder than others. Some of this was hard stuff. Then, Governor Burns prevailed on George to run as lieutenant governor. I didn’t realize until we did our round of interviews—like digging deeper—the extent to which that was a hard decision for him.

JA: Yeah.

TC: And to walk away from his law practice and so on and so on. But, he won. He won. The first governor of Japanese ancestry. He broke a barrier. I’d like to start, like kind of think about that, as that circles outward, but what did that mean to you at that point? Do you remember on an emotional or intellectual level what your reaction to that was?

JA: Well, when George was elected governor, of course we were all just elated. It was really one of our most unbelievable moments in our lives. We were so happy. Of course you know when you think about his being elected, he was the first elected governor of Asian ancestry. It made us so proud. I thought about his father if he had been alive, because I know it would have been really something that his father would—like a dream come true.

George has broken barriers before. I remember when he was asked to be a member of the board for First Hawaiian Bank. He and Bob Wo were the first board members of Asian ancestry. At that time they had broken a hundred-year barrier. That was the beginning, of course I never thought it’s going to come to being elected to governor of Hawai‘i. So all of this has been sort of like in his fate or in his karma or whatever. Seems like one followed the other. But I think that my children didn’t quite realize. They were young kids at that time, so they couldn’t kind of capture all of that feeling until later when they

- grew up and started to realize, learn history and all of that. But of course they've always been so proud of their dad.
- TC: How about his mother? She was still alive, very much alive.
- JA: Yeah. George's mother was such a very intelligent—a very dedicated mother to her son. Her whole world I think was not only her husband—Grandpa Ariyoshi—but George. George being the oldest and having gone into the army and becoming a lawyer. I think that he really fulfilled their dreams. Something they never had an opportunity to be. I think they did a lot to live through George. I felt that they—everything they did they gave wholeheartedly to their son. That is something that is so admirable. I think of many Japanese parents, also many parents of any nationality, but it was such pure-hearted dedication with such an enormous love for their son.
- TC: And then, within Hawai'i, it was sort of like Hawai'i had changed at that point. What did you see and what did you sense about the meaning level of having a Japanese American governor in terms of our whole political-social process in Hawai'i? What did you sense going on? How did you read that?
- JA: I think that when George broke that barrier, I think it was very important for Hawaiian history because it opened up the world for the others—other Asian or any other ancestry besides being a Caucasian. So, I think that it just was a wonderful thing. Anywhere else, it would happen in Hawai'i I thought, for America. So that was just a milestone not only in Hawaiian history but in American history.
- TC: I remember vividly, and I don't know if you remember this but, the night that you sat down and read my introduction to George's book that he asked me to write, you called me up and I don't know what it was . . .
- JA: Well, I can't remember really. (TC and JA laugh.)
- TC: But in that I talked about the way that—I never hear this from you but I talked about the long history of too many Japanese. A lot of subtle ways in which Japanese had been pushed back, held back. The people were apprehensive about Japanese taking too many things over and all of that. So I just wondered, did some of that come to you when you connected with, "We just won this amazing election."
- JA: The Japanese . . .
- TC: Simply, the load of anti-Japanese prejudice which you don't talk about. I don't think you seem to have experienced it very much, but I think you're not completely unaware of it. That was a barrier. That was part of the barrier, right?
- JA: Mm-hmm [yes].
- TC: Was that part of the meaning of his getting elected for you? That it was a barrier of prejudice that had been broken.
- JA: Well, you know, I really didn't feel much of that prejudice throughout my life. But I noticed that when after George got elected, I did feel sort of some of that prejudice. I

think it was maybe the first time in my life I felt that we had to overcome. You see, he broke the barrier but it's not that easy. You have to sort of overcome some of the prejudices that came with the barrier. I felt some of that for the first time. But you just have to go along with the flow. It's a negativism that one experiences, but I've always thought that you just got to not think of negatives. Think of the positives. So we always concentrated on the positives. It's something that never really bothered me in my life, at least in my whole life.

MK: You know, we've been—both you and Tom have been using this word “barrier.” What was this barrier that you'd see, or that you saw back then? What was this barrier? (Pause) For someone who's unfamiliar with Hawai'i, how would you explain, “When I said barrier, this is what I'm talking about.” What is the barrier?

JA: What is the barrier?

MK: Yeah. Like each time you used the word barrier, what was it? What was that barrier?

JA: What was that barrier Tom, to you? Because I'm just wondering whether. . . .

TC: Okay, when I think of barrier in terms of political history and in terms of the state, it was—you know Bill Quinn first got elected governor. As a person who didn't really have deep relationships or deep roots, but he was sort of this Caucasian man who Eisenhower had seized on, and he was charming and it was like perpetuation of something that was almost colonial in a way. And then, Governor Burns is elected for like three times. He is the Hawai'i, real authentic Hawai'i expression, but he is the—back then the words “white father” literally were used.

JA: Yeah, yeah.

TC: At the capitol people said, “What does the old man think? What does the great white father think?” It was like executive power, to me, was reserved for white people.

JA: Yeah. Right.

TC: But other people could participate, and that was what Burns told George, “Let's end this.” So that's my definition of a barrier.

JA: A barrier, yeah.

TC: But I do think of the long history of people saying Japanese are going to have too much influence in Hawai'i. They get organized, then there's going to be this Japanese takeover. All this vague stuff about Japan and so on. I think all that was kind of baggage in the background in my mind.

JA: Well, then when he was elected—when I think about it—he not only broke barriers but for me it meant also that one's dream can become a reality. It was a dream for George. It came on very fast with Governor Burns giving him that dream. It was just a matter of a few years that he had to decide very quickly. I think when he got elected it broke the barrier in the sense that it opened the doors for all the other children of Hawai'i no matter what ancestry. Because here was George, born in Hawai'i, reared in Hawai'i, and he

- became the first governor of such sort. So, I think that when I talk about breaking barriers, I think it not only broke but it opened instead. It opened the world for any kid in Hawai'i to say, "He did it, so I can do it too." I think that's what his election meant to me.
- TC: Let's push this outward now, because you got out and you traveled the country a lot. And the country kind of came to us, came to your doorway literally. You were like an extraordinary hostess at Washington Place. I think there was great interest in Hawai'i that was heightened by George's election. What kind of feedback do you think you got from let's say, America, first of all? Or Japan? Or both? Or Asia? It reverberated all over the place, you know?
- JA: Well, I think that when George got elected, our friends in Japan and any of the people of Japan whom we met throughout our life, it seems as though it had a great effect on that country. I really felt a lot of that. I think for Japanese in Japan, I don't think they ever dreamed that one of their ancestral children would be head of state. It made them, I think, very proud. But we felt that wherever we went—I mean George was really like a movie star. He was so popular when we went to Japan. Everybody knew his name. Everybody knew him. So in that sense I think that election really reverberated throughout.
- MK: How about in the Mainland U.S.?
- JA: In the Mainland U.S., the only thing I could feel because I went to the national governor's conference—I didn't visit the Mainland United States very often, but for the national conferences where we met other governors, we met the press people—I guess we looked different. Because we were the—we looked very different. George was always in demand and they always had our pictures in the newspaper and so I guess people were inquisitive. It's all part of this breaking people's thoughts, breaking barriers I think. That's what comes with it. That's one of the things that came with it.
- WN: I have a question. Well, the term Japanese American is something that's used more nowadays than it was maybe at that time.
- JA: Mm-hmm [yes].
- WN: Being a Japanese American. I'm just wondering, you had some feedback from Japan and some from United States. What was your identity at that time? Were you Americans of Japanese ancestry? Were you American who just happened to look Japanese? You know what I mean? What was your identity as a couple at the time he was elected?
- JA: Well, we were definitely Americans. We're Americans first with a very proud ancestry—a Japanese ancestry. People looked at us as—I mean we looked Japanese but we didn't speak Japanese. George spoke Japanese very, very fluently. I didn't. But it was sort of like a mixed reaction I think from people. Many people thought we were, "Oh you're Japanese." Others would say, "No, they're Americans." But, for me I felt I was an American. I look Japanese because it was my cultural background was Japanese, but first of all I was American. (Laughs) That's a tough question.
- WN: I know. This is a tough question.

TC: The sociologists have arrived. (JA laughs.)

WN: You're doing really well. You know there's a basketball player named Jeremy Lin who is Chinese.

JA: Oh yeah, the tall guy?

WN: Chinese American, his family is from Taiwan originally.

JA: You mean the very tall man?

WN: No, no, no.

JA: Not that one.

TC: That was Yao Ming.

WN: He's a Chinese American from Harvard actually. He's playing in the NBA [National Basketball Association] now and he's a big sensation now. In America it's because he's Chinese American. In Taiwan it's because his parents are Taiwanese. In China, because his grandparents I think were Chinese.

JA: Yes, yes.

WN: So each of these countries are sort of claiming him as their own. I'm just wondering if that was sort of the case with you and George in terms of he's Japanese. He's one of us. Something like that? Anything like that?

JA: I think that his friends in Japan could identify with George, mainly because he spoke Japanese. He looked Japanese. He had many Japanese cultural values. I think they could easily identify [with him]. I think they could probably identify with him more than me, you know. But, whenever that identity came, I felt that it came with a great pride. They were proud of George. I could see that in how they talked to him and how they would react to his thoughts.

WN: Did you feel more pressure to be more Japanese? Or did George feel more pressure? You know to maybe use a little more Japanese phrases or anything like that?

JA: No, I don't think he felt any pressure. George has always acted naturally. What he felt was right. He never put on any face or he didn't have an alter ego. He was always himself. Very natural. I don't think any pressure to try to act more Japanese—I don't think that was any part of George.

TC: To me that's one of the—I've studied him for a long time. That's one of the most remarkable things about him. He's just so comfortable being himself, but he's not egotistical. He's not smug.

JA: No.

TC: It's like wow, how does that happen?

JA: I think that George had such wonderful parents that he grew up very secure. I think in his adult life he was a very, very secure man. What he wanted to do, he'll go out and do it. He did not have an ego that got in the way like so many other people, but because of this I think he was able to accomplish much more. He was able to get out of that ego and he was able even to give credit to his cabinet members, to other legislators throughout his life.

TC: In terms of Japan—because George has this more secure relationship to traditional Japanese culture, my guess is that he did a lot more to make this link with Japan and Japanese in Japan feeling that this is a person who they could relate to as opposed to a good many Japanese who felt they really either wanted to turn away from Japanese culture or felt they had to turn away from Japanese culture. I think it was very fortuitous that George had this sort of inner security where he's good with this. And also he spoke Japanese, et cetera et cetera.

MK: You know, I was wondering, what, if any, negative reactions did you folks receive? As the governor himself or as a couple from either the Japanese side or the American side. Because you folks were so different.

JA: Yeah (chuckles), I didn't experience that many negative reactions. I felt that I was mostly accepted for what I was, what I represented. I remember though, my first group that came to Washington Place were all Caucasian. They were mainly Caucasian women. I looked at that group and, I wasn't afraid but, I said I have to win this group over. They came every year, you see, to Washington Place. The whole patio was filled. But I remember that first year I went around. I humbly introduced myself. I shook hands with everybody and tried to be really friendly. But I must say that that reaction was not as warm as I had expected.

But you know, it's really funny because to get people's respect you have to earn it. It's not going to come overnight. It's not going to come quickly. So, I decided that's what it's going to be like. And so I remember this group came every year. I did the same thing. Then there's a saying that you kill them with kindness. In fact my son Donn taught me that. Anything that is really unpleasant, you kill them with kindness. So anyway, by the twelfth year I must say it was one of the warmest groups that I hosted at Washington Place, but I realize that respect or any prejudices—I don't know what it was, whatever it was—has to be earned. It's not going to come quickly. So, that was a good lesson for me.

TC: It's interesting.

JA: (Laughs) And I think that it also comes with the title. I also went to another Oriental group. They looked at me from head to foot. I mean, I could feel the women's eyes looking at me very, very carefully. And so, I said, "Well, if this is how people are going to react I just have to be at my best." So whenever I went out in the public I always tried to look my best, because people will scrutinize you. Women are like that. It's naturally when you think about it, when they look at other women. So that was one of the other things that I felt and I said I'm going to overcome this. So that's what I did. Just tried to look my best wherever I was, whenever I was in the public.

TC: What if we go on to—okay, this is very important to your relationship with Washington Place and all you did with Washington Place. How was your relationship with native Hawaiian people in this sort of . . .

JA: Well, you know Washington Place was a home that my family—we just loved the house. We were so proud to be living in Queen Lili‘uokalani’s home. I embraced those projects I did very quickly, because I wanted Washington Place to be a home that all of Hawai‘i could be proud of. I wanted it to be the most beautiful home in the state, and that’s why I went into eight years of restoring, redecorating, trying to bring up Queen Lili‘uokalani’s—some of the things back. I did it with much passion I felt, because what I did came from the heart. I’ve always been interested in Hawaiian history and I dug into the books right away. I learned about the history of the place. I started the docent program. And my mentors were really—Monsignor [Charles] Kekumano. I befriended Po‘omai Kawānanakoa and Auntie Gladys Brandt. They were just so warm to me and kind to me and they helped me along with things Hawaiian, because I was not familiar with that. So it was a learning process for me, but I learned fast. I did things from the heart, so I think the Hawaiians—I felt such a warmth from that group. A very warm feeling. I felt that they kind of looked at me and maybe appreciated what I was doing.

I remember when my first tour of Washington Place I gave to the OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs] group. I took them to the bedroom. I said this was Queen [Lili‘uokalani]’s bed, and she probably died on it. I don’t permit anyone to sleep here, even to sit on Queen [Lili‘uokalani]’s bed. One of the members said, “Look at that Japanese girl and how much she’s taking care of the home.” They really appreciated that. So I felt that the home really belonged to the whole state. All of the people of Hawai‘i, but especially the Hawaiians, because it was Queen [Lili‘uokalani]’s home. I was the only first lady in the country that could say, “I live in a home that once belonged to a queen.” No one else could say that. It was such a beautiful tradition. And so I think that with the Hawaiian group I really not only learned to love them but they gave back to me.

I remember the last year at Washington Place they called me—the Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors. They asked whether they could come to the home. Their gift to me was in appreciation a Hawaiian name. I was just so thrilled. They gave me the name Ka Lei Nani O Ka ‘Āina, the beautiful lady of the land. So that sort of was the epitome of I think my relations with the Hawaiian ‘*ohana*.

TC: That’s a really wonderful story. Do you remember Frenchy DeSoto visiting Washington Place?

JA: Yeah.

TC: Tell us about it.

JA: Frenchy DeSoto was the OHA member who made that comment. She looked at me and hugged me and she made that comment about, “Look at this Japanese girl doing all of this for Washington Place.” So, it was Frenchy who did that.

TC: She was such a unique person. What would your description of Frenchy be for future generations who don’t get to meet her?

JA: Tom, I really didn't know her that well.

TC: Oh, okay.

JA: I knew Auntie [Agnes] "Aggie" Cope quite well. I knew Po'omai. I got to know Po'omai. Auntie Gladys Brandt. But Frenchy I really didn't know too well.

TC: Did you know John Holt?

JA: John Dominis Holt?

TC: John Dominis Holt thought very well of you. (JA laughs.) No, he did.

JA: Yeah, thank you.

TC: I remember that. I remember that very vividly.

JA: Yeah, because I called John in one day and I told him, "John, I'm looking for things that belong to Queen [Lili'uokalani]."

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

TC: Let's talk just a little bit about whatever your relationship with John was, because I remember John. In a way John was like part of a really warming up. He had a lot of subtle influence with other people.

JA: Oh yes. Yes. So I called John Dominis [Holt] in one day. We had lunch together. I told him about what I was doing at Washington Place and trying to bring home some of Queen Lili'uokalani's things. So John gave me a document and it was a copy of the original. Beautifully written, and it was the gift—that document accompanied the gift of the Music Lovers of Honolulu documenting the gift from them to Queen [Lili'uokalani]. The piano that they had made in San Francisco. All *koa*. The only piano of its kind in the whole world. It was very interesting because he told me that the four signatures—these were the people who signed the document. One of them was a Mr. [John H.] Soper, who was part of that revolution—of who uprooted Queen [Lili'uokalani]. So I had that proudly hung over the piano in Washington Place in the music room.

TC: As you've studied history in this process, what was your feeling about the overthrow and the annexation? Did it change?

JA: Well, during the overthrow I could feel for what the Hawaiians wanted through what I read about Queen [Lili'uokalani], and her trying for years to restore her kingdom to get it back. When you think about what happened later with being part of the United States instead of being part of any other country, things that have developed as Hawai'i has developed and after statehood especially, I think it was a good thing that happened for us. There's no way of knowing what we could have ended up being, but as you kind of go through the process and through history, maybe it was okay.

TC: One more question about Washington Place. How did that work for George? Living there and he supported all of these special things you were doing relative to Washington Place.

But what do you think his feel for it was? I'm curious because we never talked to him. . . .

JA: Well, I think the governor loved the home as much as I did. The whole family did. He, like all of us, would bow in front of the portrait of Queen Lili'uokalani by William Cogswell, which is now at 'Iolani Palace. We would always bow and pay our respects to Queen [Lili'uokalani]. Even his mother did that. He loved the home. I tried to make it as comfortable as I could because he would work all day at the legislature or in the capitol, and he would come home late at night.

Every night—you won't believe this—boxes and boxes of work would come after we did all our social dinners and things like that. So that little study in our bedroom was his little bailiwick where he did after-hours work every night. Truly, it was boxes and boxes of work. When I think about it, George was a fast reader. He went through everything. He was very diligent, very thorough. I remember once we used to have on the radio during campaign, people could call in and ask you questions. I remember one lady who called in and said, "Oh Governor, I wrote you a letter. This is what I asked." This and that and she was quite adamant of this and that.

George said, "Yes, I remember that letter. This is what I wrote to you."

I said, "Oh my gosh. He really does remember everything that he signed." But anyway, that was George's life at Washington Place. Mainly those big, long hours of working hard after ten o'clock. It would really go on till one o'clock. He hardly came to bed before one.

MK: When would you folks have family time?

JA: You see we needed family time when I moved into Washington Place, so I made a rule that during weekends we would not have any social events.

I opened the house to the public. Everything was free. But docents that I trained, we had tours coming in every day. Children, senior citizens, organizations. Everything was free. We did not open it to the tourists, because I felt it really belonged to the people first. Then so many nights, many nights we would have cocktail receptions and all of the charity groups would come in because it was free. They could use Washington Place as long as they took care of all of the expenses. So it really became the people's home.

And so I thought by saving weekends for the children, that was George's time, that was our time as family. During weekdays if there were nights when George was home, or during the children's holidays during the day, then I had a television in my bedroom. The bedroom upstairs was our family room. It was family room, bedroom, study. It was a room for all purposes. That's where we congregated. Of course there was no way of going down. Once we were upstairs—the children were upstairs and we were downstairs—there was no way of going down except down the steps and to the elevator. Or through the back door from the patio upstairs down through security downstairs to the ground level. I believe John Waihee built little steps from upstairs down to the family dining room where it would be private. I think that was a good idea. So the kids I know

would kind of sneak through when we had our functions downstairs. But they managed somehow.

MK: You also mentioned something interesting where you folks would bow to the portrait of Lili'uokalani?

JA: Yeah, you know in Japanese culture bowing shows respect. There's always different bows, and the lower you go the more respect we had for that person we're bowing to. So it was a gesture of respect to the spirit of Queen [Lili'uokalani], because we felt her spirit in the house. I mean, it was a very, very good spirit for us. I felt her spirit really protected my family. It was a good spirit. So to bow to Queen [Lili'uokalani] was just being respectful and being thankful, being appreciative. That's what it meant.

MK: How did that start? When did that start? That bowing?

JA: I remember that when I first—right after George's first inauguration in '74 and we entered Washington Place as governor and first lady for the first time. Of course I knew the staff there because I was doing some tours for Mrs. Burns and got to know those people. So they welcomed me with open arms. One of the first things I did was to go to the portrait and to bow. I said a little prayer of asking for help. I remember that when I left Washington Place I did the same, but I thanked her.

MK: Going back to a comment about something you remembered when Frenchy DeSoto visited Washington Place and she said, "This Japanese girl is doing all this."

JA: Yeah, yeah. (Laughs)

MK: For the other ethnic groups or the larger community of Hawai'i, was there sort of like this need to kind of show that, "Yeah, I'm Japanese, but. . ." How did you view yourself? How did you deal with how people perceived you as this Japanese girl?

JA: When I did things in any of the projects that I did, about how I was going to be perceived never came to my mind. That was not my objective. But people appreciated it. I was very thankful. And the Hawaiians really showed such warmth towards me and they showed me their appreciation. You could feel it. I could feel it. And Hawaiians are very open people. Orientals are not as open. But I did have a lot of people who are interested in history who appreciated bringing home Queen Lili'uokalani's things and things like that. A lot of the volunteer groups that came to the home did appreciate it. Somehow the Hawaiians—I think because it was Queen Lili'uokalani's home and maybe it was the first time that anybody that was living in the home tried to do the things that I did. I think that's why maybe they showed much appreciation.

TC: Did Glen Grant help you with the training of the docents?

JA: Beg your pardon?

TC: Glen Grant?

JA: No, I never knew Glen Grant. And I never knew you either. I never knew any historians. Yeah. Lynne Waihee after I knew.

TC: Was it Lynne?

JA: Yeah. Lynne worked with Glen.

TC: Glen was a dear friend of mine.

JA: Oh yeah. Yeah.

TC: Okay, sorry. Where do we go from here?

MK: I have this question. Did you ever have to downplay your Japaneseness? I'm just wondering. Did you ever have to downplay it in any way in the community?

JA: Because I always—when I'm in the community I just was myself. I never tried to put any airs or. . . . Just be my humble self. I never felt I needed to downplay anything or to put on another face or another personality. I never felt that.

MK: Changing the subject, or basically staying on the same subject, your work as first lady. We'd like to find out about the Kanyaku Imin Celebration [marking the 100th anniversary of large scale Japanese immigration to Hawai'i], a 1985 celebration and your million trees project. Tell us about that.

JA: Well, in 1985 when we had the Kanyaku Imin, everybody was doing a project. They were very excited about that year. And so a year before I had done a project celebrating the 25th anniversary of statehood. I had at that time planted and distributed 25,000 trees. That was the beginning of that thought, to plant a million trees of *aloha*. We distributed and we planted 25,000 trees, and if you look at the State Capitol, you would see these little palm trees. That was when we ended my project of 25,000 trees. At that time I had Senator [Spark] Matsunaga and I had Governor Ariyoshi. And I had [Senator] Dan Inouye. They all participated in the planting of those trees (in front of the State Capitol). That was the beginning of this idea. It was my second-to-last year, I really had planned to take it easy on my eleventh year, but it turned out to be my busiest year. That and my last year at Washington Place, because of the million trees. Then it took us a year and a half to finish the project. I think at the end we planted over a million—1,168,000 or something. The first tree was planted by Prince and Princess Hitachi at Punchbowl cemetery. The last tree was in Kōloa Park [Kaua'i], where the Japanese immigrants had spent much time there.

MK: What's the significance of one million? Why a million?

JA: Well, at first I was so taken by this project that I said, "Oh George, I'm going to plant five million trees." He didn't say anything but. . . .

(Laughter)

When I had my meeting, I had a big group helping me. They were all volunteers. They kind of looked at each other, but I didn't feel anything. But then the guys all got together and they talked to Joan Bickson, my dear friend, and they asked Joan, "Would you talk to Mrs. Ariyoshi, because you know five million, you know. . . ." I guess was unrealistic. So I remember them coming to me, Joan talked to me about it. I talked it over with [John]

“Doc” Buyers who I had asked to be my co-chair. We said one million, that’s a good idea. One million, one for each resident. That would be a very good number. So that’s how we did one million, but thank goodness it was not five million. I was very unrealistic and I would never have been able to complete that project. (Laughs)

MK: For you, what was the importance of doing this? This Kanyaku Imin Celebration and million trees. Why do it?

JA: Well, I remember these were all projects the other organizations were doing as really gifts to the state. I remember the story once when I was in Japan, in northern Japan. I went to a temple by the Kegon waterfalls. They had all these beautiful cryptomeria trees. I remember that story about how the first emperor—not the first emperor but the third Tokugawa—how he was asking all the [lords] of different areas to bring gifts to him, to keep them busy so that they wouldn’t go against him. They spent monies doing this. But there was one [lord] who I remember that story as it went, was that he was not as wealthy as the others so he gave a gift of trees. Those trees I saw were all along the—a very long miles and miles of these trees that they planted. It was his gift. It was a gift of trees. That really inspired me, that story. I think that’s where maybe I got that idea.

MK: I know that right now you’re really busy with trying to get the Urasenke tea ceremony put on in [Washington] D.C. Prior to that you were involved in other Urasenke ceremonies here in Hawai‘i in public venues. First of all, I want to find out why your interest in the tea ceremony and the Urasenke tea ceremony.

JA: Well, you must remember that Dr. [Genshitsu (Soshitsu XV)] Sen and Mrs. Sen were dear friends of ours. We were family friends. It went over along many decades. I never really got into *chadō*, the way of tea, until I had time after George retired or left politics. So at that time, Mrs. Sen had approached me and had asked whether I would gather a group of very influential ladies maybe in Hawai‘i. Like she had a group. Then to help spread the way of tea, the understanding of *chadō*. But I took it as *chadō* was such a beautiful culture. I mean the tea culture really exemplifies the heart of the Japanese culture. So I felt this would be a wonderful opportunity, because I had developed that love for Japanese culture all those years after marriage to George. Then I said, yeah why not. And so I started a group of women. They were called Yushinkai. We got involved with the Sen family, with Urasenke in Hawai‘i, and we learned about the Japanese culture. So it was a tea group that I’ve headed for twenty-two years, but I was able to also witness Dr. Sen’s [tea ceremonies].

(A clock chimes. Taping stops, then resumes.)

JA: What did I say that last sentence?

MK: You were talking about Urasenke. Started the group, and then I guess you were going into doing. . . .

JA: During those years that we studied *chadō*, I had witnessed Dr. Sen’s tea ceremonies for world peace. It was something I really could identify myself with. I appreciated it. They first asked me during the 50th anniversary of Urasenke in Hawai‘i to chair the *okenchashiki*. This was to honor the people of Hawai‘i and the Hawaiian royalty at

‘Iolani Palace. We had a thousand people there. So I chaired that first tea ceremony. Then of course from there it went on.

I did the one at Punchbowl, and a few others at Bishop Museum. Moonlight ceremony in Kāhala. Then I said, “You know Dr. Sen, to do that on the USS *Arizona* Memorial knowing that your love for the United States and what you’re doing now, with all this healing that’s been going on between U.S. and Japan, it would be wonderful if you could do a tea ceremony on the USS *Arizona* Memorial.” So he thought it was a great idea. I didn’t know whether I could do it, but anyway I asked the Parks Division—U.S. Parks Division. They said no. Three years later I asked them again and with the help of the admiral that was at [US] PACOM [United States Pacific Command] I was able to get their okay. Once we got that okay I went gung ho. So, Dr. Sen was able to on this very sacred place, on the USS *Arizona* Memorial.

For a person who was a kamikaze pilot—he never piloted a plane, but he always did tea for the young pilots that went off to war. He learned to appreciate after the war the U.S. occupation because his father did much entertainment with the U.S. government and he learned to love the United States. That’s why his first Urasenke group outside of Japan was in Hawai‘i, when he came as a young University of Hawai‘i student. So, I was very happy and honored to have him do that. It was very successful in the sense that it was a continuation of the mending between two great nations who today are the greatest allies in this bilateral relationship.

Then after that, you know how things leads one into the other. And I asked Dr. Sen, “Dr. Sen, the highest body in the United States would be in the [U.S.] Senate. In [U.S.] Congress. So maybe you could do it in Congress.” He said okay, he would do it. Then I went ahead with the help of Senator Dan Inouye and Mrs. Inouye I was able to plan it. It will be—to this day it will be a few weeks from now when it’ll happen.

MK: You know when you first came up with the idea of having the tea ceremony at the *Arizona* Memorial, what concerns if any did you have about public reaction to that for a Japanese tea master doing the tea ceremony at the memorial?

JA: I know. You see, that was the reaction from especially the Pearl Harbor survivors, and many groups I figured I would get some negative reactions. But, the very beginning I told the group—my committee—we have to be very positive about this. We have to stress the point publicity-wise and otherwise that it should be something that is part of the healing process. That we have to have some closure. Maybe this will help with that closure between two great nations who are today the best of friends. That was my thought along the way. But that negative thought never really—I never gave much thought to that.

(Taping stops to change tapes, then resumes.)

JA: (JA speaks about the visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip in May, 1975). . . . [Queen Elizabeth] was on her way to Hong Kong and she was going to stop in Guam. As you remember during those years the Vietnamese refugees had gone to Guam. And so, she decided last minute to stop by in Hawai‘i instead. I was told that the only thing she wanted was to have dinner at Queen Lili‘uokalani’s home. And I said, “Okay. . . .” So, well, I had just begun the restoration work and nothing was literally done. So, I had to

borrow carpets. So for the four museum rooms downstairs, I borrowed carpets and then of course I had to prepare a menu. So I decided we would do everything Hawaiian. Use all of our Hawaiian delicacies. Ice cream. Vegetables. Fruits. Whatever we had. The whole menu was Hawaiian in nature.

Of course I wanted to give Prince Philip a very lovely gift, and Queen [Elizabeth], but for Prince Philip I selected two Allen Akina *aloha* shirts. I understand that he was so elated about that gift that while we were having our after-dinner cocktails he went into the boy's room and he tried on the shirts. (Chuckles) Anyway, I thought that was kind of funny.

But then when the queen arrived, I was ready for every cocktail you could think of. I had no idea what she preferred to drink. When we asked her she said, "Oh, a martini would do fine."

I said, "Oh my goodness. Martinis? Do we have martini glasses to serve the queen her martini?" Because I did not remember seeing martini glasses in the kitchen, so I rushed in the back and I looked at all the cupboards. You wouldn't believe this but there was one dirty old martini glass, so you know that the administration before didn't serve martinis. So I quickly had it cleaned and washed and served the queen her martini. So that was one of the very momentous—critical moments—as far as I was concerned.

And we had beautiful Hawaiian music. We were invited later to visit the queen in Buckingham Palace, which we did a few years later.

For Emperor [Hirohito] now that same year, we had the emperor of Japan and Empress [Nagako]. After the queen [of England]'s dinner I told the household, "Listen, anything we can do. If we do this, we can do anything." So at that point even if we knew the emperor was coming, we knew we could do anything. They were a very, very wonderful group of household staff that I had. But of course with the emperor's visit the food was different. It was all served on the *lānai* for 175 guests, and it was a luncheon. I decided, well, he was touring United States. He would get the best beef, the best whatever. In Japan he could get the best Japanese food. So, I better serve the best Hawaiian food. So that's what we had. We had a *lū'au* luncheon for the emperor.

Now, I had Chuck Machado who was the caterer, and I remember I said, "Chuck, I want the soft-spoon coconut." So you know that you can eat the soft-spoon coconut from the coconut shell. That was my first request. I found out later that for 75, he had to break 150 coconuts. You know, just to get that right soft-spoon coconut that I wanted. Another thing that I realized was that I wanted all the fresh fruits, the fruits of Hawai'i for the drink. The emperor really enjoyed it. He had three glasses, so that's how I knew he enjoyed it. It was delicious, but of course the bill was not delicious. Anyway, he enjoyed it, so that was the main thing.

So he was very, very stiff. Very formal. The empress was a little more open. We had met them before that event because we were invited to Japan to visit them in the Imperial Palace, so we had that opportunity. They asked us their questions about Hawai'i, about canoeing, also about surf riding—surfing and all of that. He was interested in the pineapples. So, when we said goodbye to them at the door I remember I told him, "Your Majesty, you didn't see the pineapple fields." I asked him whether he had seen the

- pineapple fields here in Hawai‘i, and he said no. So I said, “You must come back and see our pineapple fields,” and he gave me the biggest smile. Unfortunately the cameras didn’t catch it because they were looking this way. So that’s how they left Hawai‘i, but I know that they had a very, very wonderful trip to Hawai‘i.
- TC: When did he—do you know from his personal history he had visited the United States way before right? Since the war . . .
- JA: No, it was the first visit to America.
- TC: He had never been to the United States?
- JA: No. It was the first visit to America.
- TC: It was the first visit to America?
- JA: Yes. Yes. (In fact it was the first visit of any emperor of Japan to the U.S.)
- TC: Don’t you think it’s like a part of really settling down and making normal our relationship with Japan? Because the idea of the emperor coming to America is like, you know. . . .
- JA: Yeah. It’s sort of like I felt that for the emperor’s visit, for the emperor to visit—that was his first visit to America. With all the Japanese immigrants coming to Hawai‘i from his country and here we were the first governor of Japanese ancestry, I felt like when immigration first started to Hawai‘i it sort of culminated with a Japanese American governor. I thought it was sort of like a complete sign of that immigration. That’s what I felt about.
- TC: It was like a closing of a great circle.
- JA: Yeah. Closing of a circle, yes.
- TC: The picture of the governor’s mother being introduced to the emperor was fantastic.
- JA: When we had the emperor to Washington Place, again of course nothing was done about the restoration. But, they told me that no eyes could lay on the emperor. So, we had the people come early and they all waited in the patio. But, he wanted to rest in a room. Now the four historical rooms downstairs at Washington Place have no doors, it’s all open. So I said, “Oh my God, how am I going to solve this problem?” No eyes have to lay on the emperor, so then what I did was I researched in town who had beautiful Japanese screens. Antique screens, anything Japanese, and so I had all of the rooms cordoned off just in case their eyes could not lay on the emperor, so I had that done. So when I took him into actually the blue room, what it is today where he rested, and then he had access to the bedroom, to the restroom. Then that way everything was cordoned off and I was safe. But it was something that happened when he visited us.
- TC: Okay, I wanted to get this. I think that’s really important stuff. Go ahead Michiko.

- MK: I thought that was really interesting. Your comment on what it was to have the emperor visit Hawai‘i and to visit Washington Place while you folks were there.
- JA: Right, right.
- MK: It just occurred to me. We recently went to a reception sponsored by the Urasenke Foundation, and it was to honor you, because you had received recognition from the Japanese government.
- JA: Right. Mm-hmm.
- MK: The governor [Ariyoshi] had also previously received this recognition.
- JA: Yeah, that was twenty—1986 was it? Yeah.
- MK: I was just wondering, are you folks the first couple to receive recognitions of that sort?
- JA: From what I’m told, Dr. Sen told me he thought we were the first in Hawai‘i, or possibly in the world. When I was honored, of course I was honored because of my work after we left Washington Place. Because I was involved in other projects and a lot with the tea group. So, that’s what they told me, that possibly we were the first ones to receive this honor as a couple. Although mine was twenty-six years after George received his *kun’ito*, and of course his was of the first order [Grand Cordon of the Sacred Treasure] and mine was of the second order [Order of the Rising Sun Gold and Silver Rays].
- MK: For most governors, their work deals with matters of the nation, not so much international relations. But here in Hawai‘i, Governor Ariyoshi was in a kind of different situation, and when you look back on all the years you folks were at Washington Place and as a couple hosted dignitaries or went to foreign nations, how did you view all that? Your role.
- JA: Well, during George’s time of course there were no long-flying jets. They all had to stop in the middle of the Pacific—the point was Hawai‘i. So that was during our time before you had the jets that could fly for sixteen hours. And so they had to stop in Hawai‘i, so I think we were very privileged to have entertained all of these royalties. You know, King Hussein, the queen of England, and so the list went on and on. It was a very, very interesting time for me because I enjoyed doing that.
- So of course now it’s very different with the long-flying jets, but we entertained all of these people. At that time—because when the emperor of Japan came and especially the queen of England, both that same year our first year—that’s when I felt I really needed to update the house. I wanted it to be the best home. Something that we, the people of Hawai‘i, could be proud of. That’s why I spent so many years restoring and redecorating the house.
- MK: You’ve been involved in all of these different projects. Some during the governor’s tenure, some after. Why do you do all this? Why do all of this? (JA chuckles.) You don’t have to, why do it?
- JA: It’s funny, but you know, I had so much—the more I read about Queen Lili‘uokalani, the history of Washington Place. It all started when Mrs. Burns asked me to be one of the

docents, because she wasn't able to do as much, so I did a lot—taking people through the home, and I really learned about the history of the home. I learned to really love the home, it's history. I think I love history. I appreciated that. So, for me it came very naturally. So, I'm sorry if I lost my thought. What was it, your question?

MK: Why involve yourself in all these various projects? The Washington Place restoration, the Urasenke tea ceremonies, and all the other things you've been involved in. Why do all these various projects?

JA: I think that ever since I was in high school, in college, I was active in my high school extracurricular activities. That is one thing I really enjoyed, because I love people, and I love working with people. I naturally went into it with much ease when I became first lady. I looked around and I said, "Oh, I like to do all these things." It came I think naturally for me. First of all I wanted to restore and redecorate the house. I think that was very important. Then, I got involved with the community work. I was going to the hospital, the mental hospital, but I just had a small group of volunteers. Then finally the head of the volunteer movement in Hawai'i said, "You should spend more time. Your time is valuable." So, then I branched into awarding all of the—it was called First Lady's Volunteer Services Award. So each year at Washington Place I honored the top volunteers in the state, and they came to Washington Place. So, that worked very nice. I guess in high school and in college I was always active. I loved doing these things. I guess it's because I love people and it was a great enjoyment to me, so I naturally went into this role I think. Then we did many things about bringing home Queen Lili'uokalani's things. So projects came. As they came I took it. I enjoyed work like that. That was a great enjoyment to me, to do volunteer work.

MK: I think the last time we were here, we were talking about some people who throw up lots of balls, lots of projects, and then they're happy if they catch some. Then there are others who only throw up balls if they're pretty certain they can catch them all. (JA laughs.) How do you deal with your projects?

JA: Well, you know, once I became first lady—and George was really kind to me, he let me do anything I wanted to do. Any projects. I think that what I did was what I personally was interested in, and he gave me that freedom.

We have to take a break at this point. I lost my train of thought. So you said throwing up the balls and catching it, and phrase me that question again.

MK: How do you view juggling all your different projects? Maybe that's a better way to put it.

JA: Yeah. How do I juggle?

MK: Yeah. (Chuckles) You were juggling a lot!

JA: Yeah, I know. George gave me the freedom to do whatever I wanted to do, and so it was great. I could do what I was interested in. I was interested in history. I was interested in art. I was interested in people's projects, so in that sense I was very fortunate that George gave me that chance. Because ever since I was in high school, at college, extracurricular activities was my cup of tea. I loved people. I loved doing those things. So projects came

very easily to me. So my first big project of course was Washington Place because that's where I lived. It was the people's home. I felt an obligation. And so that's why I dug into historical projects. What else?

WN: Were there any balls that you threw up in the air that you couldn't catch and you regret not catching them?

JA: I think when I did projects, I decided which projects I wanted to do. I had already targeted my balls that I was going to throw up in the air. However, I couldn't catch all of those balls, so I think what I did was selected balls that were important to me. Important to the people of Hawai'i. Where could I fit in? What could I do to help? It had to be projects I was interested in too, and I've always been a buff about history, so all of that fell into place. So I don't think I really juggled the balls. I think I had decided which balls I wanted to pick and which ones I wanted to juggle, and those were the ones I caught. (Laughs) Sorry.

MK: No, good answer. (JA laughs.)

TC: I think we're over to is there anything else you want to add? I have a true sense of completion. Is there anything that you want to add that we haven't really thought about, that we haven't asked you about? This is very open ended.

JA: No, I think when I was in high school and in college I was very active in community affairs in my school projects, and in my volunteer work. So, volunteerism was a big part of my life—my high school and college life. I think it carried over when I was married to George. I couldn't do much when I was a young mother, but I think when I went into Washington Place, things like that fell very naturally with me. So, community projects—all that sort of thing—came naturally to me. I really enjoyed that part of my role as first lady. And George was very kind. He let me do what I wanted to. So I did things I was interested in first of all, and things that I felt I could help the community with. That's how those projects were chosen. And I was happy doing it. That was my big happiness in Washington Place was the people I met and dealing with people and doing my projects.

TC: Do you ever look at all of this and just marvel at the way your life has turned out and all of the things that you have done?

JA: Well, it's so funny because I was so busy. I mean, I would wake up in the morning—until night I was busy. Twelve years as first lady. Because of my projects I was busy. I tried to fit in also George's schedule in making public appearances. I had the kids to cope with. I had growing children. I had my mother-in-law to cope with. To help her along. So it was a very demanding role. One thing I know is I didn't miss cooking, because I had a cook that really provided with my family and did all the cooking. I didn't miss the house cleaning. So all of this was such pluses that helped me along. Because of that I was able to put a lot of effort and time into my role as first lady. But they were marvelous times. They were enchanting times. They were historical times for me and my family. And they were happy times.

MK: That's a good closing.

JA: I didn't mean to say that, but was that okay? (Laughs)

MK: Yes, yes.

END OF INTERVIEW

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: BETTY NOJIMA

Betty Nojima, third of six children, was born on O‘ahu in 1928. She is just two years younger than her brother, George Ariyoshi.

Their parents, Ryoza and Mitsue Ariyoshi, were immigrants from Japan who supported the family by various means. Her father puffed bowlfuls of raw rice that were made into sweet confections, made and sold manjū, and peddled cold treats at gatherings. He also worked as a stevedore on the docks of Honolulu. The couple operated businesses, including a tofu shop, a saimin stand, and eventually a dry cleaning shop.

Betty Nojima grew up in Pālana, Chinatown Honolulu, Mānoa, and Kalihi where she helped with the cooking, household chores, and childcare.

She attended public schools and graduated in 1946 from McKinley High School where she was active in student publications and student government. At the urging of her father, she went to college.

A graduate of the University of Hawai‘i, she was a social worker on the island of Oahu.

She, like her parents and siblings, participated in her brother’s many political campaigns.

She lives on O‘ahu and enjoys being a grandmother.

Tape No. 59-8-1-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Betty Shizue Ariyoshi Nojima (BN)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

May 14, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN), Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK), and Tom Coffman (TC)

WN: Okay, this is an interview with Betty Shizue Ariyoshi Nojima on May 14, 2012. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. Good afternoon Betty.

BN: Hi. How are you?

WN: Thank you so much for coming and joining us.

BN: Thank you for asking me.

WN: First question we want to ask you is what year were you born and where were you born?

BN: I was born here on O‘ahu in 1928. That makes me eighty-four years old. I just had a birthday.

WN: Oh, congratulations! What is your earliest recollection of where your family home was?

BN: It would be Hikina Lane in Pālama. Funny I don’t remember anything prior to that but I know that my sister [Helen Yukie Ariyoshi] was born there. I suddenly became Betty when my uncle Thomas [Yoshikawa] decided to register us [in the vital statistics] with [English first names]. Betty, and my brother George [Ryoichi Ariyoshi], and my brother Jim—James [Masaji Ariyoshi]. Before that we all went by the name of Ryoichi, [Shizue], and Masaji. Helen was born with a legal [English first name] and she was given the [middle] name Yukie. My sister [June Ariyoshi] did get born until after World War II [started]. We call her the. . . what do you call. . . wartime baby anyway. (Laughs) Blackout baby. (Laughs)

WN: What number were you in the family?

BN: I was number three. I had an older sister Alice Akie [Ariyoshi]. She passed away when I was seventeen. I didn’t get to know her that much.

WN: What do you remember about her?

BN: She was strong. She was big. She was a real muscular girl. (Laughs) Sweet. Kind of recessive personality, but very nice person. She died [ca. 1946] when I was a senior in [McKinley] High School. I'm number three but I've always been number two because she passed away when she was still young.

WN: So you were almost like the oldest daughter.

BN: Yeah.

WN: What was that like being . . .

BN: . . . being the oldest?

WN: Did you have any responsibilities as an oldest daughter?

BN: Oh yeah! You know with working parents [Ryozo and Mitsue Ariyoshi] in those days I had to assume the household cooking and a lot of the home responsibilities. It was heavy work besides going to school. There would be times when George would end up telling me, "You learned how to cook this thing because you had a special lunch or something?"

I would say, yeah, today I went to such-and-such a place. So I learned how to do this and would come home and I would cook it. Not the same day but I would cook it. I loved to bake so my brother James learned how to bake cookies and pies from me. Of course being the oldest girl I had to be responsible for my younger brother and sisters.

WN: In what way? What did you have to do?

BN: Even when I went out on some dates my younger sister June would say to me, "I want to go!"

(Laughter)

BN: I would tell her, "We're only going to go Hanauma Bay. We're going to take a ride."

"I want to go!" So we would take her and I remember one time we bought a watermelon and brought it home. When we brought it home she said to me, "I want to carry it."

I said, "No, no, no! You might drop it!"

She said, "No, I want to carry it!" So she carries it and she drops it.

(Laughter)

BN: Another time I remember she said to me, "Where are you going today?"

It was a Sunday and I was going to learn how to drive, so we were going up to the University [of Hawai'i] parking lot to practice driving. She said, "I want to go."

I told her, "No, no, no! You stay, dangerous." She cried so we ended up taking her. She bumped her head on the roof (when I practice-drove into a pothole).

One day I remember we took her to the zoo. As we were walking by and holding her hand—she was in the middle—a young couple, no, a woman and her companion turned around and said, “Wow! What a young couple!”

I thought, “They think I’m a mother!” (Laughs)

Those are the things I had to do for her. Dressing her sometimes. Because she [June] was born when my mother was going through her menopause years, she said to me, “Shizue, anything happens to me, would you take care of June?” June and I are fourteen years apart. Fourteen years apart. She was a blessing.

MK: What was the governor’s responsibilities to the family?

BN: To the family? You know the boys had privileges. They didn’t have as much responsibilities as women did or girls did. He would go to his classes. Do his thing. Study. He would get by. (Laughs) He did his job by being a good boy and not causing any problems really.

WN: You mentioned this earlier but in what other ways did your mom rely on you to help with the family?

BN: When I would get home from school she would tell me, “Today we’re having this and this for dinner.” She said, “I have the meat in the refrigerator,” and I was responsible for cooking it. She would end up saying to me things like, so-and-so didn’t do whatever today so would you see that they end up doing it. Overseeing responsibilities as she would have me do.

WN: What about things like housework?

BN: Housework? We had to do housework.

Mama was so busy in the laundry [family-run R & M Kalihi Dry Cleaners]. She did all the spotting and collecting of clothes, the checking out, and she did a lot of things. My father was responsible for things like dry cleaning. When we had the laundry he did dry-cleaning and all that. He would go out and he would take orders and deliver, so he had a lot to do.

Mama couldn’t do a lot of the house things that she had to do and I had to pitch in and help.

WN: According to our chronology you remember Hikina Lane. That was your earliest recollection.

BN: Yeah. I remember. . . .

WN: Let’s see Hikina Lane. . . . Oh in 1933, so that was [when you were] about five years old.

BN: Yeah, did you ever hear about my father doing puffed rice?

WN: No.

MK: No.

BN: He would take his puffed rice machine to the different areas and he would puff the rice for like ten cents a cup.

MK: How did that work? How did the puffed rice machine work?

BN: Oh you take a big thing like this with a . . . heating area. He would put oil in it and he would [crank] it and just heat it up and heat it up until it came to a certain point. He would look at the gauge and he could tell. Then he would attach a basket to the front. Then all the kids who knew how the thing operated would stand in the front. He would open the valve or whatever you call it and the rice would puff out. They would take home a basket full of puffed rice for ten cents. One day there was an article in the paper that said he did it for twenty-five cents or something like that and my brother Jim said, "No! It's only ten cents!"

WN: So he would go to different areas to make the puffed rice in front of people and then sell it?

BN: Right. Yeah. Everybody would come 'cause they would know that he would be there. He would come to the area that he would be located and then bring the rice.

MK: The people would . . .

BN: Bring their own rice. Yeah.

MK: Raw rice?

BN: Yeah.

MK: And he would puff it?

BN: Yeah. I don't know how long he did it but I know I missed kindergarten because I went with him (chuckles) to do his peddling.

WN: Interesting.

MK: Would he flavor the puffed rice? Sweeten it or anything? Just plain puffed rice would come out?

BN: You know if you were to go into the cereal section you would see the puffed rice. That's the same kind of puffed rice it would be.

WN: Oh I see. I was thinking of the kind that comes in squares . . .

BN: No, that's already prepared.

(Laughter)

BN: He used to puff the rice and then people would take it home and then sugar it.

WN: I see. I see.

BN: My father was an interesting person. I don't know when and how he got the big, big truck, but he had a truck and he had a machine in the front and he made the most delicious frozen [ice cake]. If it was grape-shaped he would make it into a grape flavor. Strawberry[-shaped] he would do strawberry flavor. I don't know when he did it or when he gave it up but suddenly it was gone. He would get into different kinds of enterprises. Just so amazing. Just so amazing.

That's why I felt if I'm going to talk about my family and my history, I have to talk about my father and mother 'cause he was such an interesting person. When we had our Batten-ya saimin stand he made *manjū*. Did you hear about the *manjū*?

MK: No.

BN: No? The *manjū* would be in a iron [mold] like this. He would put dough on both sides and when it was cooked a little bit he would put *an* in the middle. Then he would close it and it would be in the shape of [one of the gods of fortune]. We would eat it and it was so delicious but he would do it for the family—for whoever would want it he would do it.

Mama would make saimin and somebody was talking about saimin the other day and they said the way the saimin was being made: Three pots: one for cooking, one for warming up, one for *dashi*. I said that that's what my mother used to do. She was really a good cook.

The Batten-ya was an *udon-ya*. The saimin stand.

WN: So when your mother had the Batten-ya, your father would make . . .

BN: He would make *manjū*. He would do all kinds of different things.

WN: I see.

BN: Later on when we moved to Smith Street (1930s), that's when he worked as a stevedore. He worked for Inter-Island Steamship Navigation Company and then at Matson Navigation Company. He would look forward as much as we did to the Christmas parties. He felt we would be treated to a Christmas party and he took pride in having us go and he enjoyed as much our receiving the Christmas gifts and all that. He did that and because he was a *sumōtori* he was able to work with all the Hawaiian stevedores. With all the brawn.

His name as a *sumōtori* was Yahatayama. When my daughter was born I decided I wanted to name my daughter after him. So I named her Ya-e-mi. I named her "eight-fold beauty" and she tells me, "Mom!" I'm bragging even before I knew what she was going to look like. But she turned out to be a nice-looking girl.

(Laughter)

MK: Good name. Good name. So you were saying like when the family was living in Pālama—Hikina Lane—your father had the puffed rice-peddling operation?

BN: Yeah.

MK: He had the ice cake-making thing.

BN: Uh-huh. [yes]

MK: And your mother had the restaurant—the *udon-ya*, Batten-ya . . .

BN: Hikina Lane and Batten-ya were separate areas you know.

MK: Separate areas. You lived Hikina Lane and the Batten-ya was on North King Street, yeah?

BN: King Street. Yeah.

MK: At the Batten-ya your father sometimes made *manjū*.

BN: Yeah I don't know what his regular job was. I cannot remember. But I know he must have worked because we ate well.

WN: Did you help at all at the Batten-ya?

BN: I was too young. It must have been about first grade? Maybe more?

WN: I wonder if you know if Alice worked in the restaurant at all?

BN: No. I don't think any of the children ever worked at any of the shops.

MK: What do you remember about your house at Hikina Lane?

BN: At Hikina Lane I remember a star fruit tree. I remember climbing the tree all the time. I was a real tomboy. As far as the house goes I remember certain neighbors. A Chinese family that lived at the end of the road. I don't have a good recollection of Hikina Lane. Sorry.

MK: The next place you folks lived . . .

BN: . . . was on King Street. We lived upstairs of the saimin stand.

WN: This is near where Tamashiro Market is today? Is that the place?

BN: Yeah, it's about a block away from there. I remember there was a Taira Bakery. A Takaki Sanyo-Do drugstore. We were nearby. Right near there. I remember the trolley used to run by and we used to run out and drop bottle. . . .

WN: Bottle caps.

MK: Bottle caps.

BN: Bottle caps yeah. So it would make our toy. We would put two holes in it and put a string through and then (BN makes a rattling sound).

WN: Oh.

BN: I remember that.

WN: So the streetcar would flatten the bottle cap and . . .

BN: (Laughs) What else do I remember? I don't remember stealing any rides though, on the streetcar.

WN: You're in the minority. Some people did.

BN: What else. . . .

WN: You as a girl as opposed to say George as a boy—how different were your childhoods in terms of your friends and the things you did as kids?

BN: George was a real skinny, scrawny boy. I used to feel like I should protect him sometimes (laughs) of course, I couldn't do it. I felt he was skinny, scrawny and I felt (laughs) pretty brawny.

WN: Besides the bottle cap thing, what else did you do to have fun growing up in that area?

BN: Somebody asked me to join the Japanese religious group. I was really interested and my mother said no. I listened to her and I didn't join the group but I used to participate with them. George, I don't think he had any interest like that. I don't even remember him taking judo or anything like that.

WN: Judo. Did he mention judo? I thought he did.

MK: Maybe he had some judo instruction yeah?

WN: When you say religious group what was this? What kind of group was it? Was it Buddhist?

BN: Yeah. I don't even know the name of the group now but I remember the girl who asked me. Helen. She said to me that her parents were part of the group and would I come and join them and go with them and they used to drum and whatever else. I thought it was fine, but my mother said no. So, I listened to her.

WN: Was it with the Hongwanji?

BN: No. I can't remember.

MK: What temple or church did your family go to?

BN: Hongwanji.

WN: Honpa Hongwanji [Mission].

BN: Yeah.

MK: How about Japanese[-language] school?

BN: Fort Gakuen. And then what was the one? [Hawai‘i Chūgakkō] They called it, “The Black-Coat School,” because the boys had to wear black coats.

WN: What did the girls wear?

BN: Regular dresses.

WN: I was curious. I never thought of asking a girl what they wore.

MK: What did you think about going to Japanese school?

BN: See the thing about going to Japanese school was that a lot of the time I opened my Japanese schoolbook at Central Intermediate School. I was studying Japanese in English [public] school and I thought then I should study English in Japanese school but I never did that ‘cause I was I guess more proficient in English than I was in Japanese.

MK: What were your parents’ attitudes toward school?

BN: School?

MK: Yeah. Education.

BN: Oh, they were firm believers in education. Firm believers. I remember our New Year’s Day. We would go to Shinto shrine at midnight and we would offer our—ancestor worship, yeah? We would cleanse ourselves and then we would go home and sleep and first thing in the morning we would eat *ozōni*. After *ozōni* my father always said to us—asked that we should study. So we all had to sit around the table and study. He said that what you did on the first day of the new year would set the tone for the rest of the year. I think we making good scholars. (Laughs)

WN: Boy, you had to study on a holiday huh?

BN: Yeah. But that was only for about half an hour or an hour. After that they gave us money so we could go movies or have treats. It was worth it.

WN: Of your father and your mother, who was the strict one?

BN: Most men are, but Mother was very indulgent. I think I remember one time when my father ended up telling her not to do whatever she was doing. A silly thing like you know a banana. She put sugar on the banana and she put lemon juice on it and we would eat it. It was so delicious. He said it was wasteful because it’s a banana—you could eat it raw without doing anything to it. That was the only time I thought, “Gee, first time he ever scolded us about eating!” (BN and WN laugh.)

He sat at the head of the table and he ate his meal and he would kind of observe us. If we ended up talking roughly or whatever he would reprimand us. Other than that usually he kept quiet. He kept quiet but we could feel his influence.

Mama—she was strict too but indulgent in her own way. She saw to it that we had everything we needed. She wasn't overly indulgent but she made sure we got what we needed.

One of the memories I have of her would be. . . . When the war started she was what you would call a Japanese lady. She had long, black hair. Beautiful hair. Every once in a while she would color it or she would. . . . Anyway, when the war [World War II] started she felt that she stood out as an alien. She had no clothes except kimonos. I remember going with her to Ritz Department Store. We had to buy her a housecoat because she had no housecoat. No whatever. Her hair was not permed or anything like that. We ended up trying to get her Americanized. It was so sad because she was a beautiful, beautiful Japanese lady. She got her hair permed and didn't look as nice as when she was. . . .

WN: You said that she had just kimonos.

BN: She had only kimonos.

WN: Like when she was working in the restaurant for example, did she wear kimonos?

BN: Kimonos. Yeah. I would say she was a beautiful, beautiful Japanese lady.

WN: How would you communicate with your parents?

BN: Talk to them regular way.

WN: Japanese?

BN: Yeah. Broken Japanese though. Sometimes she called me *Shi-chan*. Sometimes she called me *Shizu-bo*. When she was mad at me she would, "Shizue!" (Laughs)

WN: Did she get mad at you often?

BN: No. I tried not to get her mad with me. (Laughs)

MK: Because your brother—the governor—was the eldest son, was he treated differently by your parents compared to how they treated the rest of you folks?

BN: I don't think so. I think they were pretty fair. Pretty equal.

WN: Your father was I guess quote unquote an "illegal alien." Did you know that? When did you know?

BN: I was surprised. I thought he was legal. (Laughs) Once they knew how to fix it they did it immediately. He never felt like he was hiding.

WN: Any more questions about the parents?

MK: You mentioned that when the war started you folks had to kind of Americanize your mom. Got her western clothes. Changed her hair.

BN: Hairdo.

MK: Anything else that you noticed the family changing?

BN: Well, prewar days I think every (Japanese) family had a picture of the emperor [of Japan] in the house. So we had to destroy those. When we moved from Smith Street because we were considered aliens in the (waterfront) area, we moved to my father's cousin's home in Mānoa—the Matsukawa family. I know that they buried money. It was near a pond near the stream, so that when they finally dug it out it was all dissolved. They lost quite a bit of money, lost whatever money they had buried there.

My father raised rabbits so we could have food. Next door were Filipino laborers. They raised pigs and they ended up slaughtering it and every once in a while would give us some pork. We lived so far away from the bus stop and we had to walk like two miles to get to the bus stop on Lowrey Avenue. I remember on my junior class day I had on a pretty dress I had sewn, but it was crepe. I got caught in the rain and the dress shrank on me. I had to go into a neighbor's home and say to them, "Could I borrow your iron?" so I could iron my dress and then press it and I got it back to normal. But then I had to get on stage for junior class day and do a kind of speech. I thought, "My dress is all shrunken," and I was wearing a short dress that wasn't in style yet.

(Laughter)

WN: You were ahead of your time.

BN: Yeah, ahead of my time.

WN: How big a change was it to go from Chinatown Smith Street to living in Mānoa Valley?

BN: When we were living in Mānoa it was very primitive. The house was not for family living. At Smith Street we were next to the Tongg Publishing Company [Pacific Herald Publishing Company, 1113 Smith Street] and the scrap papers or whatever that they had that they never printed, my dad and mom got those scrap papers and they wallpapered the house so that the little cracks [were covered] so people couldn't see in. She figured they had daughters so we pasted that all on.

[In Mānoa] they would cook rice in a *kama*. So an open fire. For other cooking too. I remember one time George was asked to go and pick *zuiki*. Mama gave him instructions where the *zuiki* would be and he picked something else. So that night when we ate our throats were itchy. She said to him, "Where did you pick this *zuiki* from?" He told her and she said, "No! That's taro." I don't think he remembers that he made all of us have itchy throats.

WN: He does remember that. He just told us that story this morning.

BN: He told you?

WN: Yeah.

(Laughter)

BN: He remembers. Maybe he has a guilty conscience.

(Laughter)

WN: This was literally overnight you went from a city dweller to a country person. As you look back which did you enjoy more? Which lifestyle did you like better?

BN: I would have been a junior and a senior in [McKinley] High School so it was kind of like crucial years. Especially for boyfriends. They would ask me to go out to movies. They would have to come all the way—walk all the way in—to pick me up and take me to the movie and then walk back and take me back again. I managed to get some dates.
(Laughs)

WN: So you were born in [19]28 and you folks moved to Mānoa in late 19(43).

BN: Yeah.

WN: So you were maybe about thirteen then. Thirteen, fourteen. So you were going to Central [Intermediate School] already by the time you were in Mānoa?

BN: Yeah. When the war started I know we helped with the registration of citizens. We helped with the issuance of gas masks. What else did we help? I told you the ID yeah?

WN: This is while you were at Central?

BN: You know when the war started? Around January or so when they were doing all of these things. They ended up calling some students (from Central Intermediate School) to come in and help. (I was) in CSC (Central Service Committee) and George was in CCC (Central Community Committee). Those groups were called in to come in and help assist with registration and whatever else. I came home one day and I said to Mama, “I ate the most delicious thing today.”

She said, “What did you eat?”

I told her, “I don’t know it was something they baked on a bread and put it in the oven.” You know what it was? Cheese. Grilled cheese sandwich. It was my first taste of grilled cheese. It was so ‘*ono*. That was for helping at the school. My reward. (Laughs)

MK: So generally what kinds of foods did your mother prepare for the family?

BN: Oh, typical Japanese food. So we had a lot of *konbu*, *nori*, and *ebi* and stuff like that. She also listened to radio and she—I was surprised one day when she gave me a book that she had written out all her recipes. She had spareribs and things like that, that she used to cook for us. I didn’t think she had it by recipe but she ended up doing it by recipe. Certain things she would conceive herself and think, “If I did this, this, and this that it would come out like this,” and she would do. So she cooked stews and stuff like that.

MK: Was that during your childhood or later on?

BN: I can't differentiate and say it was childhood or whatever. I would say that's how she cooked. She was very versatile. Don't you like the way I'm talking about her?

WN: Yes.

BN: She was a nice person, a really nice person.

MK: Because she had the businesses like a Batten-ya and later on she had the restaurant, what was her daily schedule like? What time she woke up and what was her life like?

BN: She had to wake up early 'cause she had to make my father's *bentō*. He would go to work and he would come home. When he comes home the restaurant would still be open so she still would have to work until about nine o'clock. In between she cooked meals for the family. So she had a very busy day. Sundays would be the time where she could really rest. The restaurant would be closed.

She gave us each ten cents for Sunday to go out and buy whatever pastry we want. For us it was a treat. Can you imagine buying pies with ten cents? That's what we did. We would buy pies for ten cents. We would bring it home and we would eat. We'd share and eat it. That was her day off, relaxation. She had a very hectic life I would say.

WN: She was an early day working mother. She must have relied on you a lot for helping with your siblings.

BN: Yeah. I think everybody pitched in and helped too. She did most of the work as well as the outside work.

WN: It's funny because when we asked George about what his chores were around the house, he said, "I didn't really have anything," and then he said, "Even housework, our house was so small that I didn't have much." That's when I thought: I think we better talk to Betty, (BN laughs) and ask her what the chores were around the house.

BN: But Mama did most of the washing. We helped with ironing but only the simple things. Cooking we did—I did. Of course cleaning up we had to do. But, I think Mama did her share more than we did.

WN: What about things like discipline? If say your siblings came home with not-so-good grades or misbehaved in school, who would be the one responsible to deal with these kinds of things?

BN: What you said never ever happened at home. Our thing, we all came home always with good grades. Nobody ever said that we didn't listen. (Laughs) We were good kids. I think the man usually maintains the discipline of the home. I remember one time being—I don't remember what I did—but one time my father said he was going to punish me. I thought—real scared, and I said I was going to run away then.

He said, "You run away to Grandma's house and we'll find you anyway. So no sense go. We'll find you right away." So I never went. (Laughs) (And, I avoided being punished!)

WN: This grandma is on your mother's side?

BN: My mother's side, yeah.

WN: Can you tell us about your mother's side family?

BN: My mother came from [Kumamoto-*ken*] Japan. She was left in Japan when she was a young kid. Left with her aunt. My grandparents [Masajiro and Suma Yoshikawa] came here with the idea of doing plantation work and all that. I don't know whether they did or not, but after they came here the first child was born. Actually it came out twins. Real unlikely twins, you know. We talk about fraternal twins, but real unlikely fraternal twins 'cause one was short and one was tall.

WN: These were boys or girls?

BN: Boys. Uncle Slim was the first one and Uncle Bob was the second one.

Uncle Bob was such a rascal. He would go where they were living [Ōla'a] on the island of Hawai'i. He would go out—and all the stories we heard about he would go out—on the mountain and he would pick mountain apple and he would bring it home to appease his father and mother. But then right after that the schoolteacher would call and say he was this, this, and this. (Laughs) But he had already appeased them. Or, if he ended up hurting them in some way because of whatever he did he would cook the rice in the *kama* and when they would wake up the rice would be cooked. They couldn't get mad with somebody like that, right? (Laughs) He did some real rascal things. I'm a little bit embarrassed to tell you. (Chuckles)

MK: So your mother had two brothers and one . . .

BN: No, she had five brothers.

MK: Five?

BN: The interesting thing about it is that my mother had five brothers and she was the only girl. My father, [the family] had five brothers and one sister. So you know, identical.

WN: What number was your mother?

BN: My mother was number one.

WN: Oh, the oldest. And five boys after that.

BN: My father was oldest boy. Five boys. I don't know where the girl came in. But one girl.

MK: So later on your mother was brought to Hawai'i.

BN: Yes. By the time she came she already had three brothers I think. Three. Yeah.

MK: What did she tell you about her early life on the Big Island?

BN: Let's see. (Pause) Not that much. Not much. I think she worked real hard. She was maybe about eighteen and she used to talk about how she would pound *mochi* and all that. I would say, "Mama, you pounded *mochi*?" and she said that she did. I think she helped look after her brothers. Then she worked as a barber. I have a picture of her with her friend and wow, she and her friend must have been a good-looking couple. I guess the men must have gone after them. (Laughs) They were nice looking. She had a pompadour hairdo. Long. Her friend had kind of natural waves. They were posed and I thought, "Wow, what a glamorous couple!"

WN: Where was this barbershop?

BN: I don't even know.

MK: How did your parents meet?

BN: I don't even know that too. (Laughs) But my father was a *sumōtori* so he would go with *sumōtori* group out interisland. I know how one couple met. It was kind of tragic. A man fell in love with this woman who was married and he left his wife and child and divorced and then married this woman. They ended up becoming a very, very successful family. They had doctors and I think they had four or five girls. I would say she was a very beautiful woman and he was a real good-looking man. I think I would have fallen for him too. (Laughs)

TC: Could I jump in? You talk about your father as a sumo wrestler. You talk about what just a strong figure he was. Physically strong but he was a strong personality and a strong guy sort of thing. When you look back at him, how would you describe him in terms of his impact on your life, on George's life, and the other children?

BN: How would I describe him?

TC: Yeah, the impact he that he had on you folks.

BN: Well, if you feel that you need a masculine, male influence in your life, my father would have been it. He was a very confident man. He would try anything and I could see that by the various economic avenues that he traveled. I forgot the word to use now, but he was very adventurous and he would try different things.

I know that there was one point where he did furniture cleaning. I forgot the name of the place now but he had written [to the place] himself and mind you he never went to school. Never went to English school. But he had written himself or he had called and inquired himself about this venture. He was going into *haole* homes in Mānoa and cleaning the furniture and leaving them very, very, very satisfied. I would have been afraid to go in these homes because I figured they were rich *haole* families, but he went in and he did the work. He billed them and they paid. They didn't feel that he was getting away with it.

TC: When we talked to George about as he was growing up and as he was a child, all elementary school and Central and so on, and who his role models were and so on, and it would always go back to his dad. It would always go back to your father.

- BN: My father?
- TC: Yeah. It was like the family sounds like it was so strong. It was very self-contained in that way. There weren't these outside influences that overrode sort of thing. What would you say?
- BN: My father was very quiet, very conservative in his own way but you could feel his strength. Even with George's [political] campaigns, if you asked anybody my father would have been number one man. He went out and he did posters and he rounded up people and stuff like that. When it used to be that you would go camp-to-camp, my father would be an organizer too. He really was George's backer but he was a family backer too.
- WN: You talk about your father being entrepreneurial. He was looking for different kinds of business, work, ways to make money and so forth. I was wondering, did your mother say anything about all of this? Did she ever say something like, "Why don't you get a steady job?" or anything like that? Do you remember anything like that?
- BN: No. She managed all right. It wasn't that the family was having difficulty or whatever. I think she felt he could go do whatever venture he wanted to and she would still be all right about it.
- WN: She was okay with him taking these risks here and there.
- BN: Yeah. In other words they kind of complemented each other. I felt that they were very congenial between the two of them. I don't think they disagreed in terms of child upbringing or family economics. They would have seen eye-to-eye. Sometimes it would be a little lop-sided but she managed.
- TC: George described how your mother would have this almost daily prayer or daily recitation of all the things she was thankful for. I don't know if you remember that but she was very thankful—she was very grateful—for the positive things. Do you remember her as being a particularly positive person or how would you describe her?
- BN: How would I describe her as a positive person? I would say that probably she was never really never ever negative. Would that be a way of answering it? 'Cause she was almost always positive. If you believe in her then you would believe in the way she did for us too.
- TC: Was there an element of religion at work in all of this?
- BN: Religion? They were very, very active. I don't know what group it was but they would meet regularly and she and my father would go to the meetings. They would form a fellowship with the different people. So, I would say it wasn't a fly-by-night kind of attachment.
- TC: Do you not remember the name of the group then?
- MK: Was it a Hongwanji group?

BN: No, I think it would have been a different sect.

WN: But it was Buddhist.

BN: Yeah.

TC: Some kind of Buddhist . . .

BN: It was like a neighborhood [group] where the people would gather at the homes. I think every house had dozens of *zabutons* they would lay out for people to sit and they would have coffee hours afterwards. Social hours. They believed in religion.

MK: Would a minister come? A *bon-san* would come to the house?

BN: I don't think so. I remember going to some of them but I don't remember seeing any *bon-san* or anything like that.

TC: Was it something like Seicho-no-Ie or one of those type groups?

BN: My mother belonged to Seicho-no-Ie later on, but at that point it wasn't Seicho-no-Ie.

TC: What do you think the outlook of the group or the philosophy of the group was?

BN: I think basic belief in the family as the core. Doing the right things. Being under the law. So, very positive. I can't remember the name at all.

TC: That's interesting.

MK: They were with that group when you were like a child? Or teenager?

BN: No, I would have been. . . . My younger sister and I are fourteen years apart. I know June used to go and participate also, so she might have been about five and I would have been about [twenty]. But I can't remember the name of the group.

WN: So this was before the war?

BN: No after the war.

MK: This is about 19. . . .

BN: 'Cause we would have been living in Kalihi.

MK: Colburn Street time. Before Colburn Street what kind of religion was your family into?

BN: I think basically it would have been Hongwanji.

WN: It's been an hour already.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

TC: Okay, we're just about ready to get back in.

MK: Are you okay?

BN: I'm fine. I think she was with Seicho-No-Ie for maybe the longest time, longer than the other sects.

TC: What do you think she was looking for or what do you think she got out of it?

BN: I never asked her that question. One of my friends is very active with Seicho-No-Ie now. I was real curious as to why she got involved with them but I never asked her that question either. I felt that was personal so I didn't ask them.

TC: One of the things that was so interesting about one of our first interviews was—I had this conversation with your brother before but—Warren and Michi said, “Why did you decide to become a lawyer?” He said that was because he wanted to help people. So then they asked, “Where do you think you got this idea about helping people?” His answer was—one of the times he was a little vague—it was kind of like that's the way people are. They want to help people. That isn't really the way people are. You ended up being a social worker, though. You helped people, right? That's what social workers do.

BN: Yeah.

TC: Where did this impulse to help people come from?

BN: I'm kind of a busybody (chuckles). I like to listen to people's problems and help solve it for them. I guess that's where it started. People would come to me and say, “Betty, can you help me with something?” I'd say to them, sure and I'd listen. I had a good listening ear.

Even to this day, I'm at the Hawai'i Kai Retirement Center. People seek me out and say that they have a problem. Then they'll start talking. I think, gee do I have social worker written all over me?

(Laughter)

WN: So they don't know that you're a social worker?

BN: Some of them don't know. But some know and some would say, “You help people, don't you.”

The first day I met one person. She said to me, “Can you help me?” I told her that it depends on what it is. It was that she was jilted.

I said, “I'm sorry. I can't help you.”

She said, “Don't you know how to find people?”

I said that I may know some avenues, like I would use the police or whatever, but I said, “This situation, I can't help you.” She said that the family had whisked away a man and

she wanted to locate him. I said, “No, I’m sorry I can’t help you.” I put an end to the conversation.

TC: That word, I’m looking at my notes, Japanese word—*sōdan*. What is this Japanese word?

BN: *Sōdan*? *Sōdan* is consult, right?

MK: Yeah.

BN: Consult.

TC: Did you know that word when you grew up? Your father was described as—what’s the word?

MK: *Sōdan-mono*. He was a man that was sought after.

BN: People would consult...

TC: Sounds like he’s similar.

BN: Uh-huh. So would Mama. People would go to her and say to her—in fact, relatives would go to her and say to her, “What shall I do?” (but in actuality, many “*sōdan*” sessions ended up being requests for monetary aid).

Certain times she would tell them, “I can’t help you.” She would cut herself off because maybe she thought it was too precarious to get into it. (Other times, Father needed to be called in to do the final decision.)

MK: What do you remember about your father as a *sōdan-aite*?

BN: I guess whenever the *sōdan* would go on, it would be going on in private, wouldn’t be in front of children. I wouldn’t have seen him actually doing it, but I would know about it.

MK: When we asked the governor, “How come you came to be a person that wants to help others?” he told us he was like his grandson. He told us a little story about his grandson helping out . . .

BN: Was it Ryo-kun?

MK: Yeah, helping out a classmate. How do you interpret that answer as a sister knowing the governor?

BN: See, that would be like going forward or backward. He became a lawyer way before he had his grandson. So I don’t think that’s an appropriate answer. (MK chuckles.) I think if he says that Ryo-kun—he loves Ryo-kun. When the child goes to Japan, he’ll talk with him every day by telephone. One day I said to him something and he said no he can’t do it because Ryo-kun is coming back. I thought, wow! What devotion. I think he feels especially close to Ryo-kun. Ryo-kun will say things to him like, “When I grow up, I’m going to be the governor or the president.”

So I told him, “What are you going to do to prepare yourself?” (Laughs) I say that you have to know what you’re going to do. Are you going to be doing work or whatever. Then I figure I better not pursue anything or I’ll be pushing him.

MK: As a younger sister, were you aware of the governor’s aspirations?

BN: No. When he ran for representative from the Kalihi district—did he tell you who his advisor was?

MK: Tom Ebesu.

BN: Tom Ebesu, yeah. Tom was his classmate. He was very, very devoted to George. I don’t know how Tom was close to Governor Burns, but through that connection he became—because he was not an insider before. I had the highest respect for Tom. Of all of George’s friends, Tom was really number one.

TC: How did you react—first of all, George became an attorney at a time when there weren’t that many Japanese American attorneys even. What was your reaction to that? What was your feeling about that? Becoming an attorney and then being elected to the legislature.

BN: When he became an attorney—oh! (George Ariyoshi, GA, enters.)

GA: Hi.

BN: Are you going to come in? We’re talking about you.

GA: That’s what I was afraid of. That’s why I thought I better drop by because otherwise you might get mean.

(Laughter)

WN: Do you want to come in?

BN: No, no, no. You can come in, George.

WN: It’s all clean. Don’t worry.

(Laughter)

GA: You know what? No matter what bad things you say, they’re going to edit.

BN: Oh, that’s not fair!

(Laughter)

GA: Bye-bye.

WN: Okay.

TC: I’m curious about what your reaction was to his . . .

- BN: Being an attorney? Well, I think there was a time when I felt like: Can he do it? There was a little doubt because I didn't see him as attorney material before. I forgot who his advisor was that led him to become an attorney. You know, he was such a quiet recessive child. I felt like he was stepping out of his boots. He didn't seem like an attorney-type to me. (Chuckles) But I'm a sister, so who knows.
- WN: What was your view of what an attorney is?
- BN: A very strong aggressive person, a fighter. I felt like he was too quiet or recessive. I don't know. I thought he was a little bit out of his boots. But he's done all right. (Laughs)
- TC: How about when he got elected to the legislature or when he said he's going to run for the legislature? What was your reaction to that?
- BN: When he was going to run? It was a done decision so I didn't say anything. But once he got in, I knew he could do it because he had the trust of the people. If he didn't have their trust he couldn't have gone on election after election. I think he's never lost an election. Never.
- TC: He never did.
- WN: One view of an attorney is, you know, aggressive and so forth. The other view is fair, fairness. Did you see that in him?
- BN: Yeah. To succeed as an aggressive attorney, I had my doubts. I had a little bit misgivings. I don't know if he would want me to be telling this (chuckles).
- TC: A lot of people, and myself, thought that he was a very unconventional politician in the sense that he tended to speak quietly. He did not promote himself, really. He avoided getting in big conflicts with people unless he had to. He was not your usual.
- BN: That's right. Unusual, that's a good word for him. Not your usual attorney. Not your usual politician. I think people can recognize that in him. You begin to think maybe you want more but that's what he's going to give you. His fairness is whatever is going to come though at the end. I'm proud of him.
- TC: No affectations. No frills.
- BN: Yeah, plain old George. (George's personality matches father. George's campaign slogan, "Quiet and effective," fits him to well—to a "T." He observes and listens, speaks carefully and objectively before deciding. Sometimes you want him to hurry up but you can't rush him. This was my father's personality, too.)
- (Laughter)
- WN: Well, these are all good things.
- TC: How much older is he than you? He's two years older?
- BN: I just made eighty-four and he made eighty-six.

TC: Right. How did you look at him as he's growing up, though?

BN: With the greatest of respect. I felt like he was really doing something. There (was one time) when I got mad at him because he was governor. You know what it was? We had gone to Vegas; paid our own way. When we got to Vegas, the Hawaiian Airlines woman came on board with a wheelchair leg and dropped it from a height of this height on my mother's foot. Blood spurted out. I was standing there by the wheelchair ready to hold her and go take her down. I was dumbfounded that anybody would drop a heavy metal thing on anybody's foot and hurt them. She was so scared, she couldn't apologize. Hawaiian Airlines told me to run down the fairway, go around the corner and go to the first aid station. Somebody will be there. Ask them to come. My sister and I went. But I was boiling mad because my mother's hurt. She's bleeding; blood was spurting out like that, and they're telling me to go and call the first aid station. When I got there the office was closed. So I had to run back again and say to them that I'm sorry but the office was closed. They said okay and called 911 or whatever it was. But they didn't call 911 immediately.

So we got there on our paid vacation to Vegas and had to take her to the airport for emergency care. She was hospitalized. They sent a limousine for us, sent us back to the hotel, gave us the luxury room, but I didn't want any of those. I wanted my mother to be safe and sound and for us to go on the vacation that we had planned. So every day we went to the hospital and spent hours over there. Then got back and went back again in the afternoon or evening. So our vacation was really marred, yeah? If we stayed there for four days, we went there for four days. When we came back, the president or whoever of Hawaiian Airlines at that time, ended up telling me that since you didn't have a good vacation, come back and we'll give you a vacation again, a trip. When I told George that, he was governor. He told me no. I said, "But George, we paid for our trip. We didn't enjoy our trip at all." He said, no. I said okay but with a great deal of resentment because I felt that Mama was hurt. We paid for our vacation. It's not that we got a free vacation; we paid for our vacation and we didn't get our vacation. The governor, that's why (laughs).

WN: Did he tell you why, though, that he wanted you to refuse that?

BN: He did but I forgot. I guess I won't remember (chuckles).

WN: Well, we can guess why he said that.

MK: Growing up years, did your brother kind of—was able to do that and say no to something as the older brother?

BN: No, he wouldn't have been able to but as a governor he did. (Chuckles) He felt that his reputation would be marred by people not knowing the circumstances and just accepted the fact that we took a free trip. It was compensation for not having the first trip to begin with, yeah?

TC: He talks about growing up with all different racial groups around and growing up in the city environment. McKinley School. That they're not being prejudiced, by and large. I wonder if you share that view. Or you felt that there was a certain amount of prejudice

against different people and divisions among people. He seemed to look at people as everyone was pretty much equal.

BN: I think to be realistic, you would know and accept the fact that there is prejudice in the population. I couldn't say that there would be none. I'm not forgiving of all prejudices. Some, I think I hold my own self. Deep in me, I would be prejudiced in certain ways but I would not openly express it. To be honest, I would have to say everybody has prejudices.

MK: When you were growing up, did you ever experience that kind of prejudice or discrimination?

BN: Huh-uh [no]. I think because we were respectable. I never showed prejudice to other people or whatever but that would be the extent of it. I have a difficulty answering that.

WN: What about people toward you in terms of prejudice? For example, being Japanese.

BN: No, I never had that.

MK: Or coming from Kalihi, coming from Pālama, coming from Chinatown area, did you ever feel people treated you differently?

BN: Differently? No, no. I have a feeling that how you hold yourself up, is how they react to you. I never felt ashamed of being from Chinatown or Kalihi.

MK: Your family—your brother was able to go to college. You were able to go to college. When you were growing up, what were your expectations? Were you thinking that you're going to go to college and you're going to be a social worker? What were you thinking, growing up?

BN: When I was a senior, I said to my dad that I didn't take the college entrance exam. He was indignant and he was angry and he said to me, "When did I tell you you couldn't go to college?" I said that he never said it, but I assumed that girls didn't go to college. He said, "No! You go and take that exam and you go to college." I was so shocked by his strong attitude. So then I figured that my younger sisters would all go to college too. When I approached my sister Helen, she said that what she wanted to do was to go to trade school and become a designer. I thought, that's not academics (chuckles). I thought she would say academics but she said that no she didn't want to go. She became a designer and sewed clothes. She enjoyed it.

My other sister June, when she was ready to go to college and started off at university, the first exam, she became sick. She got paralyzed or whatever. I felt some of it was psychosomatic. She defied my father. She quit college. She collected whatever money that he gave her for tuition. I said to June, "How could you do that?" She made her own arrangement to go to the Mainland. She was the one who was more defiant, more belligerent. She felt that my husband would be her father (chuckles). I guess she wanted a younger man to be a father to her.

She went and she got to the Mainland. In less than six months she was talking about wanting to get married. I told her, "You're not ready yet." But she got married. My

- parents, I guess they felt that they couldn't stop her. Better to let her get married than have her get into trouble later on. So she got married at a young age. I think that she was the only defiant one. The rest of us were real compliant.
- TC: As you're developing aspirations, how was it that you decided to be a social worker? Where were you and how did you make that decision?
- BN: I don't know. It was right through college that I was determined to be a social worker. It was no turning back.
- WN: Who were some of your influential teachers in Central Intermediate or McKinley who might have helped you with your selection of a career?
- BN: I don't think I ever talked with anybody. I was just determined to be a social worker. There was a student teacher at Central Intermediate. I was really impressed with her, Miss Yee. She was so innovative that I really admired her. I thought I might become a teacher because of her but I decided I wanted to be a social worker. She was really innovative. I think for Central Intermediate—we have all the roughnecks—she managed real well in the classroom. I admired her but not enough to change me (chuckles).
- WN: I was wondering, did you have Mrs. [Margaret] Hamada? Core studies.
- BN: No. I didn't have her at all, but I just knew of her. Did George mention a Mr. Yoshida?
- WN: Shigeo Yoshida?
- BN: He did?
- WN: Yeah. Tell us about him.
- BN: Shigeo Yoshida's brother, younger brother [Ernest M. Yoshida], was a very good friend of my father. But he was an entirely different personality from Shigeo. Shigeo had a deep voice. When he talked, you listened to him because oh, he's going to say something very important to you. His brother, I don't know what kind of job he had but, he came to our house quite often, younger brother. He was small in stature. Very, very different from Shigeo. He didn't make an impression on me (chuckles).
- TC: How did Shigeo impress you?
- BN: He was what I would call a dynamic person. His speech, his manner, his—everything about him. If I was a grown woman I might have fallen for him (chuckles).
- TC: I think a lot of women probably did fall for him. I've seen pictures of him when he was young. He was a very good-looking man. And he was brilliant.
- BC: Except he was kind of balding (chuckles).
- TC: He was balding, yeah.
- (Laughter)

He was good looking. You had him in class, was that it? How did you know him?

BN: I just knew him from on the campus. I don't even know what subject he taught.

TC: Central, though? Oh, I see. Okay.

MK: And you knew that he was the brother of your father's friend.

BN: Yes. They look alike but they're different in terms of their stature, build, speech-wise.

TC: Did you follow his career after that?

BN: No.

TC: Do you know how important he was during the war?

BN: No.

TC: Okay. I'm writing a book about him now.

BN: You are?

TC: Yeah. He was very important to the community during the war.

BN: [His wife] was a very impressive woman too, yeah?

TC: She was. She [Thelma Yoshida] was a school principal. Very nice, very strong.

WN: What about a Mrs. Miyamoto? Do you remember a Mrs. Miyamoto at Central?

BN: Was she the typing teacher?

WN: I think she was George's homeroom teacher.

BN: I don't know if she was a typing teacher but I know her only physically. Nice-looking woman.

TC: Did you in your McKinley [High School years]—did you overlap at all with Dr. [Miles] Cary?

BN: Yes.

TC: What were your impressions of him?

BN: Oh. Dr. Cary, how do you describe him? I have to say, I liked him. I had Dr. Gordon before that. His wife had the bluest, bluest eyes.

WN: Is this Walton Gordon?

BN: Yeah. I liked him too but I think I liked Dr. Cary more.

- WN: We're asking George today about if he remembered any Japanese teachers at McKinley. Do you remember any or were they all mostly Caucasian?
- BN: Caucasian, yeah. I had a Chinese teacher, Miss Wong. I don't remember any Japanese teachers.
- MK: You mentioned earlier that your brother was senior class president and that later on you became an officer. How come you got interested in that kind of student body government, too?
- BN: I was co-editor of the *Daily Pinion* [at McKinley High School]. When I was in Central Intermediate, my ninth grade year, I was editor of—I forgot what the name of the paper was but I was editor of the paper. It just seemed natural that I be active, you know. I remember my advisor to the *Daily Pinion* said to me, "Are you sure you want to run for (senior-class) president?"
- I told her, "Yup!" (Chuckles) We were in a tie. I won the tie. I figured only half the people were for me.
- WN: Was it unusual at that time for a woman, a girl, to be running for president?
- BN: I think so.
- WN: Did you feel it at the time?
- BN: I remember one of my friends saying to me on April 1, 1946 when the tidal wave happened, they brought the announcement to me and I read it at a meeting, she said, "You didn't flinch at all. You just ended up reading the thing and telling us about the tidal wave." She said, "When your nose runs when conducting a meeting you're not embarrassed you just wipe your nose."
- I said, "I have to otherwise my nose would run!"
- She said, "You're not embarrassed?"
- I said, "No."
- She said, "Wow!" It was a different kind of reaction. I never expected anyone to tell me something like that. She was a member of the council. I guess she had been watching me. April means she had been watching me from September, right? April was the first time she ended up telling me that.
- MK: I was wondering. You have an older brother who goes into student government. He was a junior class officer, senior class officer. You're two years younger. You come to the same school. Your brother had also written for the *Daily Pinion*. Prior to that, he had also done some journalism at Central. To what extent was he a model?
- BN: I didn't even think so. Each time I was doing it on my own. If you ask me about what I think about my brother when I was in high school, if I was a sophomore and he was a

senior and he would ask me to dance, I would hesitate because I would be like, he's too tall! Stiff neck when I dance with him.

(Laughter)

BN: I would say to him, "I don't want to get lipstick on your shirt." But I would dance with him anyway (laughs). But neck sore.

TC: You seem like you were probably more outgoing than George was.

BN: Probably.

TC: When he got elected governor, he got a place in American history, right? Because he's the first Japanese American governor. I wonder how you, as a family member, you knew this guy from the time he was a little kid, how did you feel when he got elected?

BN: I just felt naturally proud. I didn't question that he was Japanese American, or my brother, or anything, I just didn't think about it. I was just so proud of him that he could obtain this particular honor. I knew that my dad had passed away before he became governor. Mama was very proud but she never talked about it. When she was present at any official function she was really elated.

I remember when they were trying to get her groomed for the meeting of the Queen of England, she would be in her seventies and they would teach her how to curtsy. I used to stand there and laugh and laugh and laugh. "Mama, how come you're in that position?" Because your son is governor. (Laughs)

When Emperor Hirohito came, she never thought she would be meeting the Emperor of Japan. If she were in Japan, she would have never had that opportunity. But here, as the governor's mother, she had this opportunity. Boy, she was so proud! Real proud. Almost ready to burst with pride. "My son, that's why I'm here."

TC: I see the pictures when she met the emperor. It's really a wonderful photograph that they took.

BN: Even the empress was so gracious. Anyway, my mother, I think, was the proudest of anyone who was there. Happy to be there. Proud to be there.

MK: I think Tom mentioned it earlier but sometimes we've read about your mother always feeling thankful, always expressing her gratitude to people. She would thank people for supporting your brother. At nights she would sort of say her words of gratitude. I guess it's a *kansha*, yeah? She's expressing her gratitude for what has occurred. What do you remember about that side of your mom? How come she was like that?

BN: That was typical of her. So typical of her to be so full of gratitude. Very humble, very thankful and never ashamed to express her thankfulness and gratitude. I hope I learned from her.

MK: Was that something that she tried to . . .

- BN: No. It was just natural for her. Nothing that she put on. Friends that she would know at Lanakila Senior Center where she attended, she never hesitated to invite them to come to Washington Place. You'd go there and there would be a room full of people sitting around her bed. She would say, "These are my friends from Lanakila." The friends were so happy that Mama was inviting them. They'd bring *tsukemono* and things like that. Very natural. They wouldn't hesitate either.
- MK: When you folks were kids, would she emphasize things like that with you folks? Tell you, "Oh, when somebody does something for you, don't forget to say thank you." Did she say things like that?
- BN: Yeah.
- MK: What would she say?
- BN: She would say, "*Arigatō*." It was spontaneous on her part so I can't say I remember a particular phrase or anything like that. She wasn't embarrassed about expressing herself that way.
- MK: How about your father?
- BN: My father. He's a man so not as gracious in terms of how he would acknowledge. But he would tell us that he would appreciate whatever was done, especially for the family or the kids he would show.
- TC: George thought, partly because of the [wartime] blackout, you folks would spend extra time together as you were growing up and that was part of why you're such a close family. Do you remember family times during the blackout?
- BN: Yeah. We had to be aware of even a pinpoint of light getting out. My dad used to smoke. We used to tell him, "Don't smoke because it's going to light up the whole thing." (Chuckles) Be very careful. We could be close because we were close. We were forced into a situation but it was no problem.
- TC: Did you have any resentment of the fact that you had to move [during the war]?
- BN: To Mānoa? No. It was accepting you had to move where your family goes, you're with them. No feelings against it.
- I remember when we moved to Mānoa, because of the wetness, my kid brother Jimmy developed rheumatism. He was younger than me, so I would have been fourteen or fifteen. So he developed rheumatism at age, say, thirteen. We had to carry him until he finally got through with it. That was something we had to endure, moving into a cold wet area.
- TC: If you could be in our shoes and be the interviewers, you had the luxury of being the interviewers, is there something that you would ask your brother about?
- BN: I can't think of.

WN: That's a tough question.

BN: Yeah. I'm sorry I can't answer that.

TC: You don't have this thing: I don't know what makes him tick. You feel that you know what makes him tick. That's what I get from you.

BN: I would have to say to you, I probably would have known him better prior to his marriage. But he's been married to Jean and he has her influence I would say. I (chuckles) don't want to second guess him now.

WN: I'm wondering, did you help him in campaigning at all?

BN: Yes. We ended up doing his cooking for him. You know, all the *bentōs*. The gatherings at McKinley High School, we did all his cooking for him.

WN: You mean for rallies and things like that. What kind of things did you cook?

BN: Oh! Barbeque meats, salads, *takuan* by the barrels. (Chuckles) One of my friends said, "I'm never making *takuan* anymore. I've had enough."

WN: The smell, yeah?

BN: Yeah. Not only that, but I would tell them they had to go and dig from the bottom. Their hands would be full of *takuan* juice (chuckles). But I made good *takuan*. In fact, I was just talking to my sister about making *takuan* next month when we have a family gathering.

WN: Did you serve the food too, at these rallies?

BN: Sometimes. Sometimes we just supervised. We'd teach them how to serve this much rice, this much whatever. One woman got really angry with me but I didn't know why. Later on she told someone, "I am the assistant cafeteria manager." Of whatever. "She's telling me what to do!"

I ended up going back and I said, "I'm sorry. I misunderstood. I just needed to tell you we need to worry about portion control." If you ended up giving a big portion to one person then the next person might not have enough.

She said, "I know how to serve."

I told her, "I'm sorry, you do but I have to tell you."

WN: Did you buy the food, too?

BN: We ordered it from Hata. My brother Jim took care of most of the ordering of the food.

TC: You know the famous rally at the stadium [Aloha Stadium, September 1978]?

BN: Yeah.

TC: Were you involved in that?

BN: We did the cooking at Farrington High School and had the *bentō* boxes trucked over. We found that the guys that were doing the [chicken] barbequing outside had eaten one fourth of the...

(Laughter)

TC: I don't know if you remember it, Betty, but there was a slide show there that night. I made that slide show. Bob Oshiro pressured me into making the slide show. I was so nervous when the slide show came on that I practically blanked out. I don't remember the slide show.

BN: Oh! (Laughs)

TC: There were twenty—fifty thousand people there.

WN: This is for governor, campaign for governor?

BN: Yeah. Huge, huge rally [of more than fifty thousand people].

TC: It was really something.

WN: Have the campaigns or the food, the rallies like that, changed from '54 to later? Was there any kind of change or was it pretty much the same?

BN: After George's last election, we quit. I've never gone to any rally. I don't want to go anymore. (Chuckles) I've had it up to here.

MK: So all those years whenever food was needed?

BN: We provided it.

MK: Did other members of the family have different jobs?

BN: Yeah. We were assigned. I remember being *takuan* chief. (MK and BN chuckle.) One year, I remember doing the salad dressing but I was so conservative that Jim asked me how many people I was going to serve. I told him I didn't know. He said, "You got it thick!" I told him I wanted it to be '*ono*.

(Laughter)

BN: Later on when we ran out of that good salad dressing, we just had to make mayonnaise and . . .

WN: Ketchup.

(Laughter)

MK: That's local. That works.

BN: Nobody complained. But I wanted to serve them the good, good dressing. Jimmy gave me the big scolding.

WN: Did you make beef stew, too?

BN: Yeah. Everything that was served, we did.

WN: So Jimmy was in charge of buying the stuff from Hata's. He would just get the money from somebody, some treasurer or somebody and just go in and buy?

BN: For a long, long time we made a chicken that we soaked in flour and we deep fried it. Then we soaked it in a sauce. That was really good. One day we made too much so we put it in the freezer. It didn't taste good (chuckles). Nothing like fresh. After that, we stopped making that particular dish. We went through fads.

TC: What's your family gathering going to be in June?

BN: We're going to have it at my—I used to own that condominium, that 1009 Wilder Avenue. When my nephew came and he needed to buy a place, I ended up selling it to him. So they have a penthouse up there. We're having the gathering there. My sister Helen is in charge of that particular one. June 3, I think.

TC: Does everybody come? How does that work? All the siblings come and your . . .

BN: Yeah. I think the first gathering that we had, what we call the Ariyoshi '*ohana*, we had sixty to seventy people. We met at Kahala Beach. This one is going to be smaller because, take my family for instance, my son, his son, is graduating from 'Iolani on Saturday. He said, "I don't know whether I can come or not." His daughter is coming back from Santa Clara. She's on her way to Stanford. Oh, can I brag?

WN: Yes, of course.

BN: Just one minute! Ali [Alison Nojima] got accepted at Stanford for grad school so she's going to go in September. Aaron [Nojima] is graduating from 'Iolani June 2. He had applied to different universities. Stanford told him, "If you apply here, don't apply any other place." So he couldn't apply. Meanwhile, I guess they had sent out some applications. He got scholarships for one, two, three or four different places. So what Stanford did was they referred him to MIT and he got accepted at MIT. Aaron was really afraid it was going to be a little too difficult for him. But he finally accepted MIT and he's going to go.

TC: Okay. We're out of tape.

WN: Thank you so much.

MK: Yes. Thank you. Thank you for today.

END OF INTERVIEW

GLOSSARY

The following words and phrases are non-English terms. Non-English is here defined as any lexical item not found in *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam Webster Inc., 1986).

The language family of each word or phrase is indicated by a letter or letters in parentheses:

(H) Hawaiian

(HCE) Hawai'i Creole English

(J) Japanese

(K) Korean

(O) Okinawan

(S) Spanish

References for the definitions used in this glossary include: Koh Masuda, ed., *Kenkyūsha's New Japanese-English Dictionary*, 4th ed. (Tokyo: Kenkyūsha, Ltd., 1974); *Obunsha's Essential Japanese-English Dictionary* (The Obunsha, 1972); Mary Pukui and Samuel Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, rev. and exp. ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986); and WWWJDIC: Online Japanese Dictionary Service. Electronic Dictionary Research and Development Group. <http://www.edrdg.org/cgi-bin/wwwjdic/wwwjdic?1C> (accessed November, 2016).

In some instances, the spellings and definitions were provided by Center for Oral History staff or the interviewee. Such items are asterisked.

The following definitions apply to the lexical items as they appear in the context of the transcript.

alavia (HCE) childhood game similar to tag, played with bean bags; term may have originated from *alubia*, a Spanish word for bean*

aloha (H) love, affection, compassion, mercy, pity, kindness, charity; greeting, regards

an (J) bean jam

arigatō (J) thank you

-ba (J) place; room

baishakunin (J) go-between

beiju (J) 88th birthday

bentō (J) lunch, box lunch

-bo (J) suffix, term of address usually applied to children, relatives and close acquaintances*

bon-san (J) a Buddhist priest*

buddhaheads (HCE) Japanese people*

butsudan (J) household Buddhist altar

chadō (J) tea ceremony

-chan (J) suffix, term of address usually applied to children, relatives and close acquaintances*

chanbara (J) sword battle, a fight

chazuke (J) boiled rice with tea

chee (HCE) a mild exclamation*

chōnan (J) eldest son

chūgakkō (J) junior high school

comprendo (S) I understand.

dango (J) a dumpling and sweet made from rice flour*

dashi (J) broth; soup stock

dohyō (J) sumo ring

dōjō (J) hall used for martial arts training

eki (J) station

enryo (J) restraint

furo (J) bathtub; bath

furo-ya (J) public bathhouse

futon (J) bedding

gakkō (J) school

gaman tsuyoi (J) stoic endurance*

ganbaru (J) to persist

ganbatte (J) do your best

giri (J) duty, obligation

gohan (J) boiled rice

gomennasai (J) excuse me; pardon me

haji (J) shame

hālau (H) hula school or studio*

hanafuda (J) Japanese playing cards

haole (H) Caucasian
hatake (J) farm
Hinomaru (J) Japanese rising-sun insignia
hotoke-sama (J) the Buddha; deceased person
hula (H) Hawaiian dance

ichi (J) one; first
ichinensei (J) first-year student
ichi ni san (J) one, two, three
ijiwaru (J) ill-tempered; unkind
inari (J) fox
inu (J) dog; informer

kadomatsu (J) New Year's decorative pine
kaigun (J) navy
kama (J) kiln; stove
kama'āina (H) native-born
kamidana (J) family altar
kami-sama (J) deity*
kanji (J) Chinese characters used in Japanese writing
kanreki (J) sixty-first birthday
kasane-mochi (J) small rice cake placed on top of a big rice cake for New Year's*
katana (J) sword
katsuo (J) skipjack tuna
kawaisōna (J) pitiful
ken (J) prefecture
kenjin (J) people from a prefecture
kenjinkai (J) association of people from a prefecture
kiawe (H) Algaroba tree, *Prosopis pallida*
kibei (J) Japanese-educated nisei*
kim chee (K) spicy pickled vegetables
kine (HCE) type of*
koa (H) large native tree, *Acacia koa*
kōhai (J) one's junior
kokoro (J) heart; spirit
kōkua (H) help
konbu (J) kelp
koneru (J) to knead
Konpira-san (J) guardian deity of seafaring
koseki tōhon (J) official copy of the family register
kotonk (HCE) Japanese person from the U.S. Mainland*
kozukai (J) spending money
-kun (J) suffix for boy
kyōkai (J) association

lānai (H) porch, veranda, balcony
lei (H) garland

lūau (H) Hawaiian feast
luna (H) supervisor; boss

-machi (J) town; city
makai (H) toward the sea
malihini (H) newcomer
manapua (HCE) common name for *mea 'ono pua 'a*, Chinese pork cake*
manjū (J) a bun with a bean-jam filling
matsuri (J) a festival
mauka (H) toward the mountains
mawashi (J) belt
meishi (J) business card
menpachi (J) squirrel fish
misoshiru (J) soybean paste soup
misozuke (J) miso (soybean paste) cultured pickles*
mochi (J) rice cake
mochitsuki (J) pound steamed rice into cake
mura (J) a village

Naichi (O) Japanese from the main islands of Japan
nanka; nani ka (J) What?
narazuke (J) pickles seasoned in rice wine
nasubi (J) eggplant
nigiri (J) slices of fish or vegetables over pressed vinegared rice*
Nihonjin (J) Japanese person
Nikkei; Nikkeijin (J) Japanese American; of Japanese descent
ningyo (J) doll
nitsuke (J) fish cooked in shoyu and sugar*
-no (J) of; belonging to
nori (J) toasted or dried green seaweed

O-bon (J) Buddhist All Souls' Day
o-cha (J) tea
ochazuke (J) boiled rice with tea
'ohana (H) family, relative, kin group
okagesama de (J) I am what I am because of you*
okazu (J) dish to be eaten with rice
okazu-ya (J) Japanese delicatessen
okenchashiki (J) ritual tea ceremony*
o-mamori (J) amulet
o-matsuri (J) a festival; a fete
omiyamairi (J) shrine visit
on (J) obligation
oneesan (J) elder sister
onigiri (J) rice ball
'ono (H) delicious
'o'opu (H) goby fish
'opihi (H) limpet

otagai (J) mutual
o-tera (J) Buddhist temple
otoko (J) man
otokorashii (J) manly
otō-san (J) father
oya kōkō (J) filial piety
oyabun (J) chief
ozōni (J) rice cakes boiled with vegetables in vegetable soup

peewee (HCE) childhood game played with a peg and a stick

ramune (J) lemonade

sakanaya-san (J) fishmonger
-*san* (J) suffix denoting Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms.*
sashimi (J) sliced raw fish
satōjōyu (J) sugar with soy sauce
sekinin (J) responsibility
senkō (J) incense stick
senninbari (J) 1000-stitch belt (soldier's charm)
senpai (J) senior (at school); elder
sensei (J) a teacher
shiai (J) match
shūshin (J) morals, ethics
sōdan (J) consultation
sōdan-aite; sōdan-mono (J) adviser
sumō-tori (J) a wrestler

takuan (J) pickled radish
tanomoshi (J) mutual financing association
tansu (J) cabinet, bureau
tateru (J) set up
teuchi (J) handmade*
ti (H) a woody plant (*Cordyline terminalis*)
tokoroten (J) gelidium (seaweed) jelly
toshi-go (J) children born in consecutive years
tsubo (J) pot
tsukemono (J) pickled vegetables

udon (J) noodles
udon-ya (J) noodle shop
‘ukulele (J) small stringed instrument
ume (J) pickled plum
usu (J) mortar

wīwi (HCE) a smooth, gray-barked tree in the mango family with round or ovoid fruits

yakudoshi (J) unlucky year

yakuza (J) professional gambler or ruffian

yasai (J) vegetables

yonensei (J) fourth-year student

yuinō (J) betrothal gift

zabuton (J) a floor cushion

zaibatsu (J) financial conglomerates

zuiki (J) taro stalk

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